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COLMAN FAMILY,

INCLUDING THEIR

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOST DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGES OF THEIR TIME.

By RICHARD BRINSLEY PEAKE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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OF

THE COLMAN FAMILY.

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THE leading feature of the revolution which took place in the Haymarket Theatre, in consequence of farming the Patent, says George Colman the younger, was the formation of a company of performers to act in all branches of the drama, and to overleap the narrow bounds within which Foote had chiefly confined his stage by his own plays, and his own performances in them. As the List of the Company on

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starting this novel undertaking (in May 1777), may be a desideratum to amateurs, I subjoin it, with a few notes attached.

Messrs. Aickin,	Messrs. Edwin,	Messrs. Kenney,
Bannister, C.	Egan,	Massey,
Bedford,	Fearon,	Palmer,
Blissett,	Foote,	R. Palmer,
Bransby,	Francis,	Parsons,
Davies,	Griffiths,	Pierce,
J. Davies,	Henderson,	Stevens,
Digges,	Hitchcock,	Walker.
Dubellamy,	Jackson,	

Younger, Deputy-Manager:—Brownsmith, Prompter.

Miss Barsanti,	Miss Hall,	Miss Morris,
Mrs. Collis,	Mrs. Hitchcock,	Mrs. W. Palmer,
Mrs. Davis,	Mrs. Hunter,	Miss Platt,
Miss Farren,	Mrs. Jewell,	Mrs. Poussin,
Mrs. Fearon,	Mrs. Love,	Miss Twist.
Mrs. Gardner,	Mrs. Massey,	

Mons. Georgi's pupils, children, as dancers.*

And on the revival of Garrick's Dramatic Entertainment, called "Lilliput," the parts were enacted by Masters Edwin, Hitchcock, and Pulley; and by Misses Besford, P. Farren, Francis, and Hitchcock.

The theatre opened May 15th, with my father's comedy of the English Merchant, and Lilliput; it then closed until the 28th. Its closing directly after its opening is easily accounted for, by the attempt to enter into a competition with the two great winter houses, the proprietors of which were not yet preparing to shut their doors for the summer. Empty benches at the Haymarket were the consequence of this experiment; and no wonder, when so weak a rivalry, in an incipient scheme, was set up against the attractions at Drury Lane and

* See Biog. Dramatica, 1812.

Covent Garden. What could be expected from the 'English Merchant,' a milk-and-water, though pretty comedy, from Voltaire's *Ecossaise*, and brought out ten years before? Little more could be hoped for by a revival of Lilliput, one of the flimsiest of Garrick's fiddle-faddle farces, although a new scene and a procession were added to it. This piece was entirely acted by children, with the exception of the character of Gulliver: but the 'little eyases' were not 'most tyrannically clapp'd for it.*'

"On the 28th, the little theatre re-opened to play three times a week, for the season of the great houses was then it seems drawing towards its termination, and as the cats were going to sleep, the mouse ventured again to look out at its peep-hole. After the eleventh of June, the Haymarket theatre, having the town to itself, its entertainments were continued nightly through each week of the season, Sundays of course excepted: this was one of the grand points of speculation, and it succeeded, as an improvement upon Foote's old plan, who only opened his doors on every alternate night.

"But before the house had commenced its operations, it was the opinion of the knowing ones that the chances rather threatened a losing game for the lessee, as the company of performers, with reference to those who were already known in London, appeared to be meagre in first-rate talent. Among the men, indeed, there were two excellent comedians,

* "There is, Sir, an aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of the question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for 't; these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages," &c.—*Hamlet*, Act. II. sc. 2.

and established favourites, John Palmer and Parsons; the elder Bannister was then also in full voice, and very popular, as a singer: after these, we must descend to Aickin, commonly called 'Belly Aickin,' to distinguish him from his brother 'Tyrant Aickin;' nobody could be better in his secondary or perhaps *thirdly* line of characters. Robert Palmer was then a rising young actor, who was afterwards unique in a few sketches of dramatic character, but he never attained the highest walks. Dubellamy should not be quite forgotten, who had, *faute de mieux*, stood in the place of a secondary singer for several years at Covent Garden, but he was very awkward in his deportment, and remarkable, while singing and speaking, for the cocking up of his thumbs. This person was originally a shoemaker; and it must be confessed that his mode of treading the stage sometimes provoked a remembrance of the proverb, *ne sutor ultrà crepidam.** Fearon was a respectable and useful actor, in a minor line, but I only notice him on account of a few short characters, dramatic *morçeaux*, which he was noted for acting admirably, as Stern, a sailor, in O'Keeffe's farce of 'The Positive Man;' Zedan, in Mrs. Inchbald's play of 'Such Things Are;' and two or three others. Beyond these, there were on

* In proof of "what is bred in the bone," it was told of Dubellamy, that, when he had quitted his original occupation for the stage, he one day gallanted some ladies to a shop in Cranbourn Alley, who went thither to purchase shoes. In his great zeal to see them well fitted, he found such technical fault with the articles offered to them for sale, that the shopman 'spied a brother,' and could bear it no longer. "Come, come, master," said he, to Dubellamy, "this is telling the secrets of the trade, and that's not fair to one another."

the list no male performers familiar to the London boards worth mentioning, and still fewer females.

Of these last, Miss Barsanti, was by far the most distinguished in talent. This lady was said to be of an Italian family, but there was nothing foreign in her dialect or manner. She made her first appearance in 1772, at Covent Garden Theatre, on the opening of the season, in a prelude written by my father, expressly for her introduction; it gave her an opportunity of displaying her merits, not only as an actress, but as a mimic of both Italian and English singers. I can remember, although I was then not eleven years old, seeing her act Estifania, to Woodward's Copper Captain, with a great deal of spirit and good effect. During this year, 1777, she married a Mr. Lesley; and after his death became the wife of Daly, manager of the Dublin theatre; and, in consequence, maintained an eminent position upon the Irish stage for many years. Mrs. Gardner had been long established in Foote's company, and was well received as his Mrs. Cadwallader, Mrs. Sneak, and various other comic characters in his own pieces.* Mrs. Jewell is also to be recorded as one of his hundred; she had played his young ladies in the love line, occasionally sprinkled with songs; and had played them so long, that if time strengthened our title to youth, nobody could have disputed her claim to remaining in possession of such characters. Mrs. Love, a respectable second and third rate representative of the comic old goodies, many play-goers must still remember.

* Mrs. Gardner made her *début* in 1763 at Drury Lane, as Miss Prue in Congreve's "Love for Love."

"Here ends my enumeration of all the regulars worth enumerating. Foote himself can scarcely be included as one of the company, for he performed only three times during the season, on the 11th, 25th, and 30th of July, and although his re-appearance was advertised, it was postponed again and again, through illness. He had 'fretted and strutted his hour,' and Fate decreed that he should be 'heard no more.'

"The dearth, however, of superior abilities, which might have been perceptible in the above *Corps Dramatique*, was completely remedied by three new performers, who made so strong an impression upon the town, that they evinced the excellence of the manager's judgment in having selected them. These were Henderson and Edwin, and Miss Farren, Any one of these, coming singly, would have been a most happy acquisition of lustre, in a hemisphere where Palmer and Parsons were the only two very brilliant luminaries; but coming all together, the additional stars produced a constellation, and the Haymarket welkin was in a blaze. It is needless now to record their subsequent engagements at the larger theatres, or to trace them through their career of celebrity.

"On June the 11th, 1777, Henderson made his appearance in Shylock. Having long been spoken of as a second theatrical prodigy, the whole circle of critics attended to give judgment on his abilities, which was very far from unfavourable from the plaudits bestowed on his most interesting scenes. Mr. Henderson discovered in this character considerable merit; by nice discrimination he gave

point to some situations unknown to Macklin. It must not be inferred, however, that they played the character upon the whole so well as Macklin; for not being blessed with such an Israelitish visage, Henderson was under the necessity of having recourse to art to mould his features into the Jewish mask, which nature of her own accord so completely stamped upon Macklin. To this perhaps may be attributed Macklin's ease and superiority in Shylock; which no doubt led the wag, when asked by him to write his epitaph, to reply in this laconic distich:—

'Here lies the Jew,
'That Shakspeare drew.'

Lord Camden in a letter to Garrick, August 11, 1777, says:—"Your Birmingham counterfeit has stolen your buskin, and runs away with all your applause into the bargain; but I shall soon see him stripped to the skin and exposed in all his Scotch nakedness to the world. I hope your friend, Colman, is not privy to the trash we see every day in the papers to put off this clumsy fellow. Charles Fox dined here yesterday, and thinks as I do of Henderson."

Notwithstanding this piece of flattery to Garrick, the subjoined fact will prove that the manager of the Haymarket theatre was of a different opinion.

"Mr. Colman, when he engaged Mr. Henderson to perform at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket, agreed to pay him a certain sum for the season, and he was to make the most of him. In consequence of this agreement, that rising actor has been kept actively employed during the whole summer. As

the receipts, however, much exceeded Mr. Colman's expectations, he desired Mr. Henderson to fix on whichever night he thought most advantageous for a benefit. As soon as the entertainment on the evening of Mr. Henderson's benefit was over, the treasurer delivered him the account, at the head of which there stood this line:

	£.	s.	d.
House Charges, by Mr. Colman's order,	0	0	0.

There is something so liberal both in the manner and the matter of this compliment, that it ought not to be passed by without remark. It does Mr. Colman infinite honour, and it is to be hoped it may serve as an example to other managers, wherever extraordinary merit appears."

George Colman the younger, thus speaks of Henderson:—

"Without pausing to inquire into the impartiality of Garrick's censure upon any fellow-artist, which was at least equivocal, when he compared the silver tones of Barry with the hooting of an owl, he plainly acknowledged in the midst of his dispraise, Henderson's capabilities, nay even pronounced him a phenomenon; and however injudicious friends, with Cumberland at the head of them, might have operated upon his 'sparks of fire,' it did not appear upon his arrival in town that they had raked them out; on the contrary, something, his own genius and study, most probably had blown them into a flame, and after they had increased the heat of the Haymarket Theatre in the dog-days, no Bath stove ever warmed London audiences at Christmas more to their satisfaction.

" Henderson seems, in his style of acting, to have followed, though not servilely copied, the very man who reprobated his manner. As to his Hamlet being ' a mixture of tragedy, comedy, pastoral, farce, and nonsense,'* how any body ever did, or could give a touch of the pastoral in Hamlet, I cannot comprehend; but in respect to the other ingredients, are they not exactly those of which Shakspeare has been pleased to compose the character? The Don John of Henderson, which the mighty Roscius condemned, was in my mind very Garrickian: his Falstaff, a part which was to Garrick a *noli me tangere*, was as rich a specimen of acting, *quoad* the fat knight, as I ever witnessed.

" It is not easy to understand Garrick by his ' paving, when he is emphatic,' whether it was meant that he rammed down his words with his lungs, or his action, there is no denying that Henderson had contracted some bad habits in deportment: such as an odd mode of receding from parties on the stage, with the palms of his hands turned outward; and thus backing from one of the dramatis personæ, when he was expressing happiness at meeting. With these adventitious faults, he had to contend against physical drawbacks, his eye wanted expression, and his figure was not well put together. My father was anxious to start him in characters whose dress might either help or completely hide personal deficiencies, accordingly, it was arranged that the first two personations should be Shylock and Hamlet, in

* See Garrick's Letter to Colman, from Bath, dated April 20, 1775.

which the Jew's gaberdine and the Prince of Denmark's 'inky cloak' and 'suit of solemn black' were of great service. I know not whether Falstaff immediately followed these; but whenever he did come, Sir John's proportions were not expected to present a model for the students of the Royal Academy. By this management, the actor's talents soon made sufficient way to baffle such ill-natured remarks as might have been expected upon symmetry, and the audience was prepared to admit, when he came to the lovers and heroes, that

'Before such merit all objections fly.'

"I do not mean by what I have said to cry up Henderson beyond his deserts, but to protest against running him down: he was many degrees below the standard of Garrick's theatrical genius, and many degrees above the mark of his critical detraction.

"The memory of Edwin, however, is not so old that I have much to say that is new of him: there are sufficient documents of his being the best burletta singer that ever had been, or perhaps ever will be, and of his obligations to O'Keeffe, and of O'Keeffe to him, through the reciprocity of author and actor. What has not yet, I believe, been observed of him is, that nature, in gifting him with the *vis comica*, had dealt towards him differently from low comedians in general, for she had enabled him to look irresistibly funny, with a very agreeable if not handsome set of features; and while he sung in a style which produced roars of laughter, there was a melody in some of the upper tones of his

voice that was beautiful. There was no medium in his performance of the various characters allotted to him—he was either excellent or execrable, and it might be said of his acting, as my father in one of his farces makes a gourmand remark upon Shakspeare's writing, 'it was like turtle, the lean of it might perhaps be worse than the lean of any other meat, but there was a quantity of green fat about it which was delicious.' I do not quote accurately, not having the book before me; but Edwin had a great deal of green fat, his good acting had a copious range, for besides his Lingos, his Peeping Toms, *et hoc genus omne*, many authors of his day were indebted to him; I, among others, particularly for his performance of Trudge and Gregory Gubbins, in my early plays of Inkle and Yarico and the Battle of Hexham. Liston is exquisite in his line, Edwin was equally so; the rich humour of these two eminent artists is distinct: that of the departed comedian was peculiar to himself, and, as the living actor now singeth, *vice varsy;* but I know not how I can better express my opinion of both, than by stating that I admire Liston now, as I admired Edwin formerly, and that when Edwin was, and Liston is, in his element, I have no conception of a greater comic treat than the performance of either.

"Miss Farren,* then in her teens, made her

* A leading journal of the day thus speaks of Miss Farren, the Spanish Barber, and Garrick's Epilogue to it:—"The genteel figure of Miss Farren captivated the Haymarket audience on her first appearance, and inclined them to receive her efforts with candour and applause. The promising prospect of her standing forward in the first line of comic actresses, which her performances exhibited, not only ratified the first opinion the public

début, June 9, as Miss Hardcastle, in Goldsmith's comedy of 'She stoops to conquer.' She conquered so much subsequently, in the superior walk of comedy, that she might have stooped in resuming this character, although it is worthy the acceptance of an actress of great ability: she came most opportunely to prevent a chasm, which would have been greatly lamented, and to personate modern females of fashion, when the retirement of the Abington, with the *vieille cour* was approaching. To dilate upon the history of the lovely and accomplished Miss Farren would be very superfluous; no person ever more successfully performed the elegant levities of Lady Townly upon the stage, or more happily practised the amiable virtues of Lady Grace in the highest circles of society.

"Foote was weak enough to betray his soreness at my father's prosperous proceeding: he could not bear to see anybody or anything succeed in the Haymarket but himself and his own writings, and forgot that a failure of the new scheme might possibly endanger the regular payment of his annuity. His pique broke out sometimes in downright

had formed, but incited them to cherish, with more than common applause, a female so perfect in point of figure and so near maturity in professional ability. What was the consequence? Mr. Colman, who may surely be deemed a tolerable judge of rising merit, gave Miss Farren the principal character in his comedy of the Spanish Barber, and persuaded his friend, Garrick, to trust her with the Epilogue; a mark of confidence which men conversant in theatrical affairs know to be of material import. Miss Farren has not only acquitted herself creditably in the comedy, but gained applause from the most rigid critics, by her admirable mode of delivering the Epilogue. A good proof this, that public encouragement ought ever to wait upon growing ability.

rudeness. One morning he came hopping upon the stage during the rehearsal of the Spanish Barber, then about to be produced; the performers were busy in that scene of the piece when one servant is under the influence of a sleeping draught, and another of a sneezing powder. 'Well,' said Foote drily to my father, 'How do you go on?' 'Pretty well,' was the answer, 'but I cannot teach one of these fellows to gape as he ought to do.' 'Can't you?' replied Foote, 'then read him your last Comedy of the 'Man of Business,' and he'll yawn for a month.' On another occasion he was not less coarse, though more laughable to an actor, than he had been to the manager. This happened when Digges, of much celebrity out of London, and who had come to town from Edinburgh, covered with Scottish laurels, made his first appearance in the Haymarket. He had studied the antiquated style of acting, in short he was a fine bit of old stage-buckram, and Cato was therefore selected for his first essay. He 'discharged the character,' in the same costume as it is to be supposed was adopted by Booth, when the play was originally acted, that is in a shape, as it was technically termed, of the stiffest order, decorated with gilt leather upon a black ground, with black stockings, black gloves, and a powdered periwig.*

* Davies, in his Dramatic Miscellanies, 1784, says, "The heads of the English actors were, for a long time, covered with large full bottomed periwigs. Until within these last twenty-five years, our Tamerlanes and Catos had as much hair on their heads as our Judges on the Bench. Booth was a classical scholar, and well acquainted with the polite arts; he was conversant with the remains of antiquity, with busts and coins, nor

"Foote had planted himself in the pit, when Digges stalked on before the public thus formidably accoutred. The malicious wag waited till the customary round of applause had subsided, and then ejaculated, in a pretended under-tone, loud enough to be heard by all around him, 'A Roman chimney-sweeper on May-day!' The laughter which this produced in the pit was enough to knock up a *débutant*, and it startled the old stager personating the stoic of Utica; the sarcasm was irresistibly funny, but Foote deserved to be kicked out of the house for his cruelty, and his insolence in mingling with the audience, for the purpose of disconcerting a brother actor.

"Digges had too much intrinsic merit, notwithstanding all his old fashioned mannerism, to be put down by Foote's satire. His Cato, or rather Addison's Cato, as Johnson characterised him, was too dull for frequent repetition, but Digges played it a second time,* and his Wolsey was greatly approved. Here, 'his gesture and eloquence' assisted him in delineating the 'high-blown pride' of the Churchman: and, in the scene of the Cardinal's fall,

could he approve such a violation of propriety, but his indolence got the better of his good taste, and he became a conformist to a custom which he despised. I have been told, that he and Wilks bestowed forty guineas each on the exorbitant thatching of their heads."

* Digges' real name was West. He was born in 1720, and was supposed to be the natural son of a nobleman. He quitted the army in 1749 for the stage, and made his first appearance in London, August 14, 1777, in the character of Cato. He personated Cardinal Wolsey twice, and Sir John Brute twice. This last he repeated for a benefit, on September 18, after the regular season had closed. He died at Cork, November 10, 1786.

he drew tears, the genuine tributes of approbation, even from the eyes of flinty-hearted critics.

" In the next season, his performance of Caratach in the revived and altered play of Bonduca was an excellent piece of acting. His style and age, however, which confined him to a narrow range of characters, forbade his making anything like such an impression as was produced by the three performers previously mentioned, but he was invited, like them, to the honours of an engagement in the Winter Theatres.

" After Digges, all the other new comers except Blissett and Mrs. Massey can only be considered as different shades of the middling and underling: they must be classed under one general term, like Æneas's common-place companions, '*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum,*' and were, in newspaper language, ' respectable.' Mrs. Massey was a somewhat squeezy lady, with features not much more attractive than her figure was majestic, but she evinced sound judgment, and a good deal of energy in some grave and tragic characters. Blissett, a great favourite for many years at Bath, made a good hit as Basil, in the then new comedy of the Spanish Barber, '*O, si sic omnia!*' he was ineffective in every thing else, although he tried both comedy and tragedy, but the less of tragedy, in the Haymarket, at least with the company of which I am now speaking, the better.

" Monsieur Georgi's infantile pupils, as dancers, were a complete burlesque upon a *corps de ballet.* The audience laughed, and tolerated the poor little things, when they were pushed on between the

acts to caper and lose their shoes, while Monsieur Georgi was *peste*-ing, and *sacre-dieu*-ing at them, by the side of the scenes. There were two or three hobbedy-hoys among them, but some were so young, that keeping them up late at night to the injury of their health, seemed as if the cruel manager had resolved to try a new method of murdering the innocents.

"To have done with the Haymarket theatre, at least for the present, the experimental season proved successful, and lucrative, beyond the most sanguine hope, and the new monarch with his new *régime* was thoroughly established."

The School for Scandal was produced at Drury Lane this year (May 8, 1777), with such known and well merited success, that a remark on it would be superfluous. Garrick furnished the Prologue, and Colman the Epilogue to it; this latter we subjoin.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. Abington, *in the character of Lady Teazle.*

"I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one old rusty weathercock—my spouse;
So wills our virtuous Bard! the pye-ball'd Bayes
Of crying Epilogues and laughing plays.
"Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives!
Each bring his dear to town—all faults upon her—
London will prove the very source of honour;
Plung'd fairly in, like a cold bath, it serves,
When principles relax—to brace the nerves.
Such is my case—and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation 's o'er;
And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,

Like me, untimely blasted in her bloom,
Like me, condemn'd to such a dismal doom?
Save money—when I just knew how to *waste* it!
Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early-crowing cock?
The melancholy ticking of a clock?
In the lone rustic hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curates can I now retire,
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the 'Squire)
And at backgammon mortify my soul,
That pants for *loo*, or flutters at a *vole*?
Seven's the main!—dear sound!—that must expire,
Lost at *hot-cockles* round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
" Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
" Farewell the *plumed* head—the cushioned *tête*,
" That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
" The spirit-stirring drum!—*card drums* I mean—
" *Spadille! Odd trick! Pam! Basto! King!* and *Queen!*
" And you, ye *knockers*, that with brazen throat
" The welcome visitors' approach denote,
" Farewell!—all *Quality* of high renown,
" Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious town.
" Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
" And Lady *Teazle's* occupation 's o'er."
All this I told our Bard—he smil'd, and said 'twas clear
I ought to play deep tragedy next year:
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away.
" Blest were the fair, like you, her faults who stopp'd!
" And clos'd her follies when the curtain dropp'd!
" No more in vice or error to engage,
" Or play the fool at large on Life's great Stage!"

Henderson made his first appearance at Drury-Lane in Hamlet, with alterations, Sept. 30, 1777, Ophelia, by Mrs. Robinson. When Henderson came to London in June, to perform during the summe. at Mr. Colman's theatre, he was engaged under a penalty of 300 guineas to act during the ensuing

season at Bath. Sheridan, however agreed to pay him a handsome salary to play at Drury Lane, during the winter; and Mr. Palmer, the Bath Manager, consented to this arrangement.

On the 4th of February, 1778, Mr. Colman moved the Court of Chancery on a bill and affidavit, in which he stated, that he had purchased the copyright of the comedy of The Cozeners, the comedy of the Maid of Bath, the comedy of The Devil upon Two Sticks, and of other pieces as yet unpublished of the late Mr. Foote, for a considerable sum of money; and therefore prayed the Court to grant an injunction against a bookseller to prevent his further sale of these comedies, two of which he had published, and the third he had advertised for publication. The Court immediately granted the injunction. It was stated that if the above property of Mr. Colman could be invaded without redress, the proprietors of the comic opera of The Duenna, and the comedies called The School for Scandal, and Know Your Own Mind, were liable to a similar injury, as their right stood exactly on the same ground with that of Mr. Colman.

We will resume George Colman's (the younger) description of the Haymarket Theatre, this year:

"Previously to the second season of 1778, the interior improvements of the house were effected. It was new roofed, the ceiling heightened, the slips or sidelong appendages, in the olden times, to the upper gallery, were turned into a third tier of front boxes; and an approach of a few feet wide and fewer deep, dignified by the name of a lobby,

was made to the boxes; whereas, in Foote's days, there was scarcely any space at all between them and the street; so that the attention of the audience, in this part of the theatre was frequently distracted by post-horns, and the out-of-doors cry of 'extraordinary news from France,' while the modern Aristophanes, upon the stage, was threatening French invaders with 'peppering their flat-bottomed boats,' in the character of Major Sturgeon.

"The former ugly facings of the boxes and galleries were entirely changed, and now consisted partly of gold balustrades, partly of gold mouldings, upon a white ground; the whole had a light pleasing effect, and preserved the *simplex munditiis*, notwithstanding its gilding and its gaiety. My father talked hugely of the money which all this, particularly the roof, had cost him; but he had succeeded to a profitable playhouse, at a remarkably cheap rate, and owed this expense to the public.

"After all, the plan of this little theatre was at best miserably 'cabined, cribbed, and confined.' The avenues to all the side-boxes were so incurably narrow that, when two corpulent gentlemen met in them, and endeavoured to squeeze past each other, there was great danger of their sticking by the way. I often thought, during my own possession of this diminutive theatre, it would be better to furnish my side-box customers with a bell, to tie round their necks, at the pay-door of the house, upon the same principle as that of providing waggon-horses with such tinkling apparatus, to give notice of their approach, and prevent confusion and jostling in cross

lanes, or defiles of the highway: but, however the audience in this little theatre, which is now levelled with the dust, might be cramped for room and accommodation, they certainly could hear and see the performers upon its stage better than upon those covered Salisbury Plains which now characterize the two grand winter houses."

The season commenced May 18, with a comedy in three acts, entitled 'The Female Chevalier,' altered from Taverner. The prologue on opening the house, written by Colman, was spoken by John Palmer, with some additional lines on the death of Foote. The manager of the Haymarket was remarkably active in catering for the public, for besides other novelties, he produced his comedy, 'The Suicide,' in four acts. On this arrangement, a critic of the day thus remarks:—'It may probably serve as a precedent for revising and curtailing many of the stock comedies of the theatres, from which one act at least might very well be spared, the progress of the machine being tediously interrupted by insipid dialogue.' Garrick furnished the Epilogue; but this comedy did not give general satisfaction. The late Mrs. Hannah More, in a letter to Garrick, September 22, 1778, thus writes:—'I hear a sad character of our little friend's comedy. Lord Shelburne, Lady Cork, and Mrs. Poyntz, told me the other day, that it was a wretched thing, and dishonoured him both as an author and a man. This paper would not hold all the severe things thus said of it, especially Mrs. Poyntz, who spoke of it with an aversion that almost approached to abhorrence, as she said the

most intimate family secrets were exposed and ridiculed.'

On July 20, a laughable accident took place at the Haymarket Theatre. The ladies at that time wore very large hats, some idea of which may be formed by a reference to many of Rowlandson's caricatures, in his figures at races, watering places, &c. The head-dress of a celebrated lady, who sat in one of the green boxes, touched one of the side lights, and caught fire. The flame instantly communicated to the hat of a lady who was seated next to her, and the house was in a roar of laughter for some minutes. It is impossible to say where the conflagration might have ended, had not a gentleman, who seemed to be much interested in the fate of the ladies, with great dexterity extinguished the flames.

On July 30, Colman revived the tragedy of 'Bonduca,' altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, and it was very favourably received.

The first alteration of this play was made in 1696, by an unknown editor. In the following year another change was made in it by Charles Hopkins, when it was performed at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn. Mr. Glover, the author of 'Leonidas,' produced a new tragedy on the same story in 1753, and, following modern historians, gave the name of Boadicea to his heroine, instead of Bonduca. Finally, Mr. Colman made different alterations of the first piece, produced in 1647 by Beaumont and Fletcher. The subject was judiciously chosen and well-timed, and being introduced to favour by an excellent Prologue, had a run.

The following note from Horace Walpole, was addressed to Colman, on the subject of a farce which he had placed in his hands. It exhibits much modesty, but stage fright is indeed an appalling thing; and there has not yet been a dramatic writer, let him boast as he will, who has not severely suffered by it.

"The author of 'Nature will prevail,' is extremely obliged to Mr. Colman for his civility, and sorry he cannot have the courage to be known for an author. He does not mean to give Mr. Colman the trouble of correcting his farce, but, as he is very sensible of the little merit there is in it, Mr. Colman is perfectly at liberty to make any alteration in it he pleases, as he must be a much better judge of what is proper for the stage than the writer can be. If Mr. Colman has any thing else he wishes to say, the bearer will attend him at any time he shall appoint, to receive a note with his commands."*

On August 3rd, a comic opera, in two acts, called 'The Gipsies,' was brought out; but after five representations the Gipsies were compelled to decamp; and on the 17th of the same month another new comic opera, called 'The Flitch of Bacon,' founded on the well-known custom of the Manor of Dunmow, was brought out, and continued to be the favourite. The music, fable, and dialogue were equally admired.

The season of 1778 was successful, and Colman

* Horace Walpole did not at this time avow himself as the author of the dramatic proverb called 'Nature will Prevail,' played at the Haymarket, in 1778. It was printed in his works, 1798, 4to. vol. ii.

gained another step towards his permanent establishment in the Haymarket.

"During the dog-days the Haymarket Muses," says George Colman the younger, "had not a little unsettled my reason; hopes were entertained of my recovery in the autumn, when lo! an accident in December quite unhinged me again, and brought on a relapse of stage mania stronger than ever. This fortuitous occurrence was the going with my father into Wales to pass the Christmas holidays with the late Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who gave at this time of the year, and for some years in sequence, Private Theatricals in Denbighshire.

"In the cast-book so kindly lent to me by Mr. Charles Wynn, it appears that the Wynnstay theatricals were continued annually for nearly forty years, from 1770 to 1808, inclusive; but in the latter years the performances were of a more private nature, the spectators being confined to the party in the house. On one particular occasion, a piece was acted out of the usual season, and underwent a most formidable ordeal; for the document runs thus: 'Chrononhotonthologos, performed October 2, 1777. Mr. Garrick was present.'

"This was a year and not quite four months previous to Garrick's death. For raw undisciplined actors to stand the scrutiny of the tremendous 'Roscius,' it required a more than ordinary effort of nerves; they were judicious, therefore, in selecting a piece of such broad burlesque as puts the exercise of keen judgment and rigorous criticism, upon the merits of performers, out of the question.

" Dramatically imbued as I had just been, nothing could better suit my young propensities; and never were parties more festive, nor arrangements better made for the perfect ease and comfort of a house full of guests, than at Wynnstay, the family mansion of the much-esteemed and hospitable Baronet. The *company* here when *off* the stage was superior to any regulars *on* it, but I much doubt whether my father, or any London manager, would have offered the best actor among them a good salary. The party upon these occasions staid about three weeks, began to muster strong about eight or ten days previously to the performance, acted through the holiday week, and separated a few days afterwards. At the fullest time of our season, we generally sat down to dinner from twenty-five to thirty in number upon an average, the family and guests, partly visiting actors, partly audience, included.

" Previously to the regular performances in each season, we had two dressed representations of them, which might be called public rehearsals, to edify and astound the inferior natives, the farmers and tradesmen. These joyous, unsophisticated folks, with their wives and daughters, were in comparison with our more refined visitors, as the London galleries are to the dressed boxes, much the most cheering audiences to the actors. Their applause, it must be owned, was too injudicious to be very flattering; and their expressions of delight were sometimes directly the reverse of that which might be wished: as in the instance of King Richard the Third's dying speech, after his desperate struggle with Richmond,

at which they laughed *à gorge déployée!* We certainly were very attractive, for the good Cambro-Britons, of the first families, flocked from distant domains to see us, some came from thirty miles off, and carriages were in such requisition at the inns, that on one night there were two mourning coaches waiting in the park, which had each brought a merry party of six insides.

" The theatre at Wynnstay has in its time been destined to provide food both for the body and the mind; it was originally a kitchen, built on the occasion of its late possessor's coming of age, which event was celebrated with all observance of eating and drinking, to be expected on the twenty-first anniversary of the birth of a Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, whom his attached Cambro-British tenants were wont to mention, without meaning, honest souls! to say anything profane, as the deity of North Wales. This building, although intended to be temporary, was I know not how many years old when I saw it, and is still I believe extant. It afforded no capabilities, except space, for altering it from a kitchen into a theatre; the alteration, however, was made with good taste: it presented a plain simple interior, with no work in it, as there was in its pristine state, for the carver; and, as it could not boast altitude proportional with its breadth, and horizontal length, the audience part had neither boxes nor galleries, but consisted merely of a commodious pit. This construction had one advantage which cannot, I presume, be obtained in any of our

large public playhouses, namely: there was no row of flaring lamps, technically called the float, immediately before the performers' feet, in front of the proscenium, but this same float was affixed to a large beam, formed into an arch, over their heads, on that side of the arch nearest to the stage; so that the audience did not see the lamps, which cast a strong vertical light upon the actors. This is as we receive light from nature, whereas the operation of the float is exactly upon a reversed principle, and throws all the shades of the actor's countenance the wrong way: a fault which seems to be irremediable; for, if a beam to hold lamps, as at Wynnstay, were placed over the proscenium of Drury Lane, or Covent Garden theatre, the Marybone goddesses in the upper tiers of boxes, and the two and one shilling gods in the galleries, would be completely intercepted from a view of the stage. But, however incurable this defect may appear, it is possible, that, in this age of improvement, some ingenious architect, while theatres are springing up like mushrooms, may hit upon a remedy; at all events, it is a grand desideratum.

"My father's habits of the shop broke out naturally enough at the first rehearsal; he sat tolerably tranquil for some time, observing the awkwardness of the amateurs, and their ignorance in the commonest arrangements of the stage: they either crossed behind each other's backs, or ran against one another, in the attempt to change sides; at length the under-butler, who, in the dearth of numbers

was made a minor actor, in attempting to deliver a sword to the person he was addressing, did it so very clumsily, that the Haymarket manager could bear it no longer: jumping upon the stage, and snatching the sword out of the man's hand, he cried 'Zounds, sir, can't you do it thus?' showing him the proper way, but the under-butler was dull, and begged for further directions how to give it. 'How?' said my father, 'why as you gave a gravy-spoon to Sir Watkin yesterday at dinner; you did that graceful enough: I observed you.' After this, the ice was broken, the gentlemen actors saw that they might profit as much as the under-butler, by my father's stage knowledge, and from that moment he became stage-manager, and driller of the whole company. As to the distribution of parts, he was wont to express his sentiments to Sir Watkin upon this head in the following liberal manner: 'Amateurs, my dear Sir Watkin, should not be jealous about showing off in the best characters, like regular actors. Now, if we get up Richard the Third, or the Merchant of Venice, which you have talked of, I shall have no objection to taking Richard in the one, or Shylock in the other, anything to accommodate. In fact, he was vastly superior to the whole corps.

"My father shone among the amateurs *velut inter ignes Luna minores*, which might naturally have been expected from an experienced dramatist, Garrick's intimate, his colleague in writing The Clandestine Marriage, and an able manager, long practised in drilling his performers at rehearsals, and reading plays to them in the Green-room.

" Sir Watkin was, after my father, the best actor in the company, and played Tom Errand, I remember, with much drollery. The character of Host of Wynnstay he performed the whole time we were there to the utmost perfection; and the hostess was as admirably represented by the now Dowager Lady Williams Wynne.

" I went annually to Wynnstay for three seasons, beginning as a promising actor, and having greatly risen in my cast of parts, after the first year.

" Whether in my own attempts at acting I proved myself, as my father afterwards called me in his prologue to my first play, 'a chip of the old block,' I am not competent to determine; he now and then commended me; but this, in all likelihood, proceeded either from parental partiality or his habitual encouragement to a theatrical novice.

" As I am writing particulars which refer so much to myself, some curious trifler may possibly wish to ask me the same question which Hamlet puts to Polonius, 'what did you enact?' I therefore give a list of the characters; but I am not 'so capital a calf as to say, like King Claudius's Lord Chamberlain, that I was 'accounted a good actor.'

" In my first season, being then upon my probation, and not long turned of sixteen, my beginnings were humble, as Ginks in The Royal Merchant;* Paris, Mr. Oakly's French *valet-de-chambre,* in The Jealous Wife, and Biondello, in Katharine and

* An alteration by H. N. (probably Henry Norris, the comedian), from Beaumont and Fletcher's Beggar's Bush, and in this altered shape has been frequently performed.

Petruchio. In the two subsequent seasons I was advanced to the following parts:—Guiderius, in Cymbeline; Tressel, in King Richard the Third; Lazarillo, in The Spanish Barber; Old Woman, in Rule a Wife and Have a Wife; Young Wilding, in The Liar; Lord Minikin, in Bon Ton; Young Cape, in The Author; Young Clincher, in The Constant Couple.

"My transition in January 1779 from the festivities of Wales to the austerities of a College, was more violent than agreeable. My father on his way to town dropped me at Oxford, leaving me there, after having seen me matriculated.

"On my entrance as a member of Christ Church, I was too foppish a follower of the prevailing fashions to be a reverential observer of academical dress: the hand of time was forestalled by the fingers of the barber, and an English stripling with his hair flowing over his shoulders was, in the course of half-an-hour metamorphosed into a man, by means of powder, pomatum, the comb, the curling-irons, and a bit of black ribbon to make a pig-tail, in truth I was an egregious little puppy, and I was presented to the Vice-Chancellor to be matriculated in a grass-green coat with the furiously be-powdered pate of an ultra-coxcomb, both of which are proscribed by the statutes of the University.

"Much courtesy is shown, in the ceremony of matriculation, to the boys who come from Eton and Westminster; insomuch that they are never examined in respect to their knowledge of the school classics; their competency is considered as a

matter of course; but, in subscribing the articles of their matriculation oaths, they sign their *prænomen* in Latin; I wrote, therefore, *Georgeius*, thus, alas! inserting a redundant *e*, and, after a pause, said inquiringly to the Vice-Chancellor, looking up in his face with perfect *naïveté*, pray, sir, am I to add '*Colmanus?*' My Terentian father, who stood at my right elbow, blushed at my ignorance; the tutor, a piece of sham marble, did not blush at all, but gave a sardonic grin, as if scagliola had moved a muscle! The good-natured Vice* drollingly answered me, that 'the surnames of certain profound authors, whose comparatively modern works were extant, had been latinized; but that a Roman termination tacked to the patronymic of an English gentleman of my age and appearance, would rather be a redundant formality.'

"There was too much delicacy in the worthy doctor's satire for my green comprehension, and I walked back, unconscious of it, to my college, strutting along in the pride of my unstatutable curls and green coat, and practically breaking my oath, the moment after I had taken it.

"A freshman, as a young academician is called, on his admission at Oxford, is a forlorn animal. It is awkward for an old stager in life to be thrown into a large company of strangers, to make his way among them, as he can; but to the poor freshman every thing is strange, not only college society, but

* The Vice-Chancellor, I think, Dr. Horne, was at this time President of Magdalen College.

any society at all, and he is solitary in the midst of a crowd.

" If indeed he should happen to come to the University, particularly to Christ-Church, from one of the great public schools, he finds some of his late school-fellows; who, being in the same straggling situation with himself, abridge the period of his fire-side loneliness, and of their own, by forming a familiar intercourse: otherwise he may mope for many a week; at all events, it is generally some time before he establishes himself in a set of acquaintance.

" An outline of my own grievances, on my *début* as a commoner at Christ-Church, may serve to describe the state of almost all the new comers. The college was then full if not overflowing, and afforded me a very remote prospect of sitting down in regular apartments of my own; in the mean time, my tutor stowed me in the rooms of one of his absent pupils, which were so much superior to those of most other under-graduates, that I did not at all relish the probability of being turned out of them, as soon as the owner arrived, and he was daily expected. Even this precarious tenure was envied me by several of my contemporaries; for the college was so completely crammed, that shelving garrets, and even unwholesome cellars were inhabited by young gentlemen, of whose families the servants could not be less liberally accommodated.

" The retainers in my establishment at Oxford were a scout and a bedmaker; so that, including myself, I might have said with Gibbet, ' my company is but small, we are but three.' There was

this difference, indeed, between Captain Gibbet* and myself, he insisted on dividing booty with his gang, but I submitted to be robbed by my adherents.

" The bedmaker whom I originally employed was rather more rapacious than her sister harpies; for, before she commenced the usual depredations upon me, she had the ingenuity to ' rob me of that which did not enrich her,' and made me very uncomfortable indeed! The article of which she contrived to despoil me was neither more nor less than a night's sleep: this aforesaid theft was committed, as the deponent hereby setteth forth, in manner and form following:

" My spirits had been flurried during the day, from the revolution in my state, launched from the school-dock into the wide ocean of a university; matriculated by the Vice-Chancellor in the morning; left by my father at noon; dining in the hall at three o'clock, unknowing and almost unknown; informed that I must be in the chapel next day soon after sun-rise; elated with my growing dignity; depressed by boyish *mauvaise honte* among the *sophs*; dreading college discipline; forestalling college jollity: ye gods! what a conflict of passions does all this create in a booby boy!

" I was glad, on retiring early to rest, that I might ruminate for five minutes over the important events of the day, before I fell fast asleep.

" I was not, then, in the habit of using a night-lamp, or burning a rush-light, so, having dropped

* See Farquhar's ' Beaux Stratagem.'

the extinguisher upon my candle, I got into bed, and found, to my dismay, that I was reclining in the dark, upon a surface very like that of a pond in a hard frost. The jade of a bedmaker had spread the spick and span new sheeting over the blankets, fresh from the linendraper's shop, unwashed, unironed, and unaired, 'with all its imperfections on its head.'

"Through the tedious hours of an inclement January night, I could not close my eyes, my teeth chattered, my back shivered, I thrust my head under the bolster, drew up my knees to my chin, it was all useless, I could not get warm. I turned again and again, at every turn a hand or a foot touched upon some new cold place, and at every turn the chill glazy clothwork crepitated like iced buckram. God forgive me, for having execrated the authoress of my calamity! but, I verily think, that the meekest of Christians who prays for his enemies, and for mercy upon all 'Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics,' would in his orisons, in such a night of misery, make a specific exception against his bedmaker.

"I rose betimes, languid and feverish, hoping that the customary morning ablutions would somewhat refresh me, but, on taking up a towel, I might have exclaimed with Hamlet, 'Ay, there's the rub!' It was just in the same stubborn state as the linen of the bed, and as uncompromising a piece of huckaback, of a yard long, and three quarters wide, I give the usual dimensions, as ever presented its superficies to the skin of a gentleman. Having washed and scrubbed myself in the bed-chamber, till I was flayed with the friction, I proceeded to my sitting-

room, where I found a blazing fire, and a breakfast very neatly laid out, but again I encountered the same rigour! The tea equipage was placed upon a substance which was snow-white, but unyielding as a skin of new parchment from the law-stationer; it was the eternal unwashed linen! and I dreaded to sit down to hot rolls and butter, lest I should cut my shins against the edge of the table-cloth.

"In short, I found upon inquiry that I was only undergoing the common lot, the usual seasoning, of almost every freshman whose fate it is to crackle through the first ten days or fortnight of his residence in college: but the most formidable piece of drapery belonging to him is his new surplice, in which he attends chapel on certain days of the week: it covers him from his chin to his feet, and seems to stand on end, in emulation of a full suit of armour. Cased in this linen panoply, the certain betrayer of an academical *débutant*, the newer-comer is to be heard at several yards distance, on his way across a quadrangle, crackling and bouncing like a dry faggot upon the fire, and never fails to command notice in his repeated marches to prayer, till soap and water have silenced the noise of his arrival at Oxford.

"The principal calamity, however, of the freshman, by which, as I shall presently show, he smarts in purse and suffers in person, arises from his ignorance in œconomics; from his utter helplessness in providing himself with the common articles of consumption and comfort, requisite for the occupancy of a lodging.

"My two mercenaries, having to do with a per-

fect greenhorn, laid in all the articles for me which I wanted, wine, tea, sugar, coals, candles, bed and table-linen, with many useless *et cætera*, which they told me I wanted; charging me for every thing full half more than they had paid, and then purloining from me full half of what they had sold. Each of these worthy characters, who were upon a regular salary, introduced an assistant, the first his wife, the second her husband, upon no salary at all, the auxiliaries demanding no further emolument than that which arose from their being the conjugal helpmates of the stipendiary despoilers.

"Hence I soon discovered the policy of always employing a married scout and bedmaker, who are married to each other; for, since almost all the college menials are yoked in matrimony, this rule consolidates knavery, and reduces your ménage to a couple of pilferers instead of four.

"Your scout, it must be owned, is not an animal remarkable for sloth, and, when he considers the quantity of work he has to slur over, with small pay, among his multitude of masters, it serves perhaps as a salve to his conscience for his petty larcenies. He undergoes the double toil of boots at a well-frequented inn, and a waiter at Vauxhall, in a successful season. After coat-brushing, shoe-cleaning, and message-running, in the morning, he has upon an average half a dozen supper-parties to attend, in the same night and at the same hour, shifting a plate here, drawing a cork there, running to and fro, from one set of chambers to another, and almost solving the Irishman's question of 'how can I be in two places at once, unless I was a bird?'

"A good and really honest drudge of this description is a phenomenon at Christ Church, and even then his services are scarcely worth the purchase, he is so split into shares, that each of his numerous employers obtains in him something like the sixteenth of a twenty-pound prize in a lottery.

"In those my days of academical precocity, a brother collegian of my own non-age, with whom I was very intimate, and who is now a dignitary of the Church, frisked up to London, while I remained at Oxford. During his short stay in town, he made the young Oxonian's usual discovery of a vacuum in his pocket; and his reflections upon it were not at all in unison with that contempt for riches manifested by Diogenes in his tub; looking at the question algebraically, he was decidedly of opinion that converting the *minus* of his finances into *plus*, would be vastly agreeable. It occurred to him, therefore, that being of an excellent family, though a younger brother, he might raise a good round sum at once for his present and future *menus plaisirs;* and there were then in London, as there always will be, plenty of depredators, who profess to furnish pecuniary accommodation, not merely for gentlemen come of age, but even for infants of good expectancy.

"One morning I received a letter from him: he in London, and I at College, enclosing his draughts upon me for five hundred pounds, which he desired me to accept, as a matter of course, that he might complete a loan: in the flush of youthful friendship, and ignorance of worldly business and cares, I subscribed the bills without hesitation, and sent them back by return of post.

"A few days afterwards he sent me a second letter, containing further bills to the same amount for my acceptance, stating that there was some informality in the first draughts, which were therefore useless. I accepted *de novo;* thus the notes for five hundred were *encored* to the tune of a thousand!

"The reader need not be told that my friend, who was as unpractised in the world as myself, had fallen into the clutches of one of those low advertising scoundrels who call themselves money-scriveners, with whom the town swarms. All the money advanced was a hundred, or a hundred and fifty pounds; the first bills were not returned when the second were given; all of them were put into circulation, and brought against us, according to their dates, as they became due.

"Here was the devil to pay, or rather the bill-holders, confederates most likely with the original rascal, were to be paid or not paid, as it might happen. The young pigeons had no assets; the rooks therefore attacked the parent nests; in other words, they attempted to bully our relations.

"My father, on being apprized of what had occurred, was outrageous against me; he forgot every line in his elegant version of parental lenity towards youthful delinquents;* far from being intimidated by

* 'Tis this, then, is the duty of a father;
To make a son embrace a life of virtue
Rather from choice than terror or constraint.
Here lies the mighty difference between
A Father and a Master. He who knows not
How to do this, let him confess he knows not
How to rule children.'

Colman's Translation of The Adelphi of Terence, Act I. Sc. 1.

the claimants, he swore, that instead of paying them a shilling he would make a Bow-street business of it, and take them all up for a parcel of swindlers; in respect to non-payment, he most religiously kept his oath.

"I do not exactly remember how the affair was settled, but it appeared, upon investigation, that I had never received, or expected to receive, any money upon the bills; my seeming prodigality, therefore, dwindled into the old story, the imprudence of becoming 'bound for a friend.' My father, in consequence, as one of the consulting family elders who met upon the occasion, declared himself *hors de combat*; and I believe that my friend's mother, who was a widow, and his near relative Sir * * * *, compromised the matter at some expense; which upon principles of public justice should perhaps have been resisted, particularly as there was every reason to suspect that the bill-holders were not *bonâ fide* creditors. But let me apostrophize my quondam associate, who was engaged with me in this transaction:

"Dear and worthy Doctor! my condiscipulus of Westminster, and chief companion at Christ Church, who in our spring of life didst nourish with me those blossoms of regard which were blighted by vernal accidents, and have never come to fruit. Bosom friend of my immaturity! refuter among thousands, of that fallacy which perceives a freehold in the frail tenure of school and college connexions, how many terms and long vacations have flitted over our heads since last we parted! those heads which, while thou didst speculate upon borrowed

gold, little recked how time, in his stealing course, might silver them! But shouldest thou bestow a glance upon these rambling pages, and I think it probable that thou mayest, first, because their publication may excite thy curiosity in respect to the records of thy early friend; secondly, which perhaps should be first, because thou mayest expect to find therein some mention of thyself, no matter for the motive; but should these crudities fall in thy way, they will cause thee to ruminate awhile perhaps, and to philosophize upon this wild transaction of our 'salad days, when we were green in judgment.'* They may bring back to thy mind's eye the eight-feet square study, thy *sanctum sanctorum*, in Peckwater Quadrangle, whither we were wont to retire, after our 3 o'clock dinner in the Hall; and there, over a bottle of fiery Oxford port, worthless and pernicious, dear Doctor, as the draughts which I had accepted for thee, compose letters to our angry relatives, palliating, as ably as we could, the follies which had brought us into such a scrape. Thou mayest recollect, too, I can, if thou canst not, thy ingenuous impulses of youthful honour, which made thee so anxious to take the whole blame upon thyself, and to clear me from the supposition of being an intended participator in the loan, calling thyself the only responsible man, at which my father, to whom thy letter was addressed, would frequently laugh outright after his wrath against me had subsided, for much indeed did he chuckle at thy manly tone, and the ripe responsibility of thy pubescence.

* Antony and Cleopatra, Act I., Scene 5.

"Several of the offspring with which Christ Church teemed, at the period I am recording, were destined to become eminent men. Of embryo statesmen, there were the Marquess of Wellesley, Earl Bathurst, and the late Lord Grenville, the last of whom became Chancellor of the University. There was also the late Lord Colchester, Keeper of the Privy Seal in Ireland, who was speaker of the House of Commons. Appended to these, as if by a foretaste of his attendance on the Lords, was the much respected Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt; whose gentle and unassuming manners, in his conspicuous office of Usher of the Black Rod, so well accorded with the personal modesty of his perpendicular elevation above any surface parallel with the horizon.

"There was, moroever, the late Samuel Whitbread: this honourable gentleman was not of the first-rate abilities, yet, after certain Whigs far superior to him in talent had dropped off, he did not rank meanly as a wrangler in the Lower House. One of his speeches at least has been immortalized, by a parody attributed to the Muse of Canning; and most of my readers must remember the lines in which the rhetorical brewer, like another pious Æneas, holds forth over the ashes of his defunct father. I need not quote the entire passage:*

"While summing up my statement, I forgot to notice a declamatory practice of Lord Wellesley. His Lordship occupied apartments in the old Quad-

* 'That day, too, he died, having finished his summing,
And the Angels cried out, here's old Whitbread a-coming;
So that day I hail, with a smile and a sigh,
For his beer with an *E*, and his bier with an *I*.'

rangle, adjacent to mine ; being on the same tier of building, although belonging to a separate staircase. Instead of a party-wall, there seemed to be no intervening materials but canvas, lath, plaster, and the modern papering of our ancient rooms ; so that

' thin partitions did our bounds divide.'

In consequence of so slender a barrier, I could not avoid hearing his Lordship at times reciting, or reading aloud, what I conjectured to be the orations of Demosthenes and Tully ; these were, I presume, self-imposed exercises of a political tyro, training himself for public speaking, and ambitious of the eloquence which he has, since, so happily acquired ; but the medium, slight as it was, through which the tones were to penetrate, was sufficient to prevent me from distinguishing inflections of the voice, or, indeed, much of its articulation ; it was almost *vox et præterea nihil ;* and verily, under such obstructing circumstances, his Lordship's utterance did appear to me to be characterised by a most wearing and dismal uniformity of sound ! calculated either to irritate the nerves of a next neighbour, or to lull him to sleep.

" This casual monotony of an unfledged Minister was, however, frequently broken by the running of the rats ; who had established a strong opposition against the noble Lord, and there was no calling them to order. Frequently in the midst of his harangue, one of the heaviest trotters of the party would take a sudden frisk, and run squeaking and skirring along behind the lath and plaster, from one corner of the room to the other ; but this was according to the due order of things in such Par-

liamentary anticipations, for the Houses of Lords and Commons are no more free from rats than other edifices; and it is the nature of such vermin to be continually shifting and changing sides.

"Among my youthful contemporaries in so clerical a hot-bed as Christ Church, there could not fail to be plenty of future parsons; some of these have shot up to the height of dignitaries, partaking in the honours and revenues of a Cathedral, or a Collegiate Church; others have branched into the rank of incumbents, with all the pastoral fruition of fat benefices, glebe land, 'tithe pig, and mortuary guinea.'* The late Doctor Hall was dean; Doctor Pett, archdeacon, and Doctor Dowdeswell, are canons of Christ Church, the College in which they were under-graduates. Doctor Webber is an archdeacon, and a residentary canon of Chichester; and the names of David Curzon, Robert Lowth, Henry Drummond, Charles Sandby, *cum multis aliis*, have all, if I mistake not, been annexed to good Church preferment. With the above-mentioned divines, omitting Doctor Phineas Pett, I was intimate; they are all, I believe, alive, and I hope well, except Dr. Hall and the much lamented Robert Lowth. I left them, when they were young, in the fostering bosom of *Alma Mater*, seldom or never to meet again! Though inhabiting the same island, and often probably sojourning in the same town together, our dissimilar avocations have placed us 'far as the poles asunder.' They took the righteous

* So Pope, in imitation of Swift, speaks of
'October store, and best Virginia,
'Tithe-pig, and mortuary guinea.'

road in life, and have prospered; while I, like 'a reckless libertine,' preferred 'the primrose path' to wicked playhouses, and became, in every acceptance of the phrase, *a poor poet.*

"Had my rage for scribbling, by the by, broken out before I quitted Oxford, I do not recollect any rival, the Professor of Poetry* always excepted, whom I should have encountered in the whole University,† but Poet Harding. This man was a half crazy creature, as poets indeed generally are, and was well-known in most of the colleges. He ran the bell-man hard in composition, but could not come up to him in rank, or in riches; living chiefly upon what he could get from the undergraduates, by engaging to find instantaneously a rhyme for any word in the English language; and, when he could not find, he coined one; as in the case of *rimney* for chimney, which he called a wild rhyme. To this *improvisare* talent, he added that of personification; sometimes he walked about with a scythe in his hand as Time; sometimes with an anchor, as Hope. One day, I met him with a huge broken brick, and some bits of thatch, upon the crown of his hat: on my asking him for a solution of this *prosopopœia*, 'Sir,' said he, 'to-day is the anniversary of the celebrated Doctor Goldsmith's death, and I am now in the character of his 'Deserted Village.'"

* The Rev. Thomas Warton.

† Oxford was better stocked with poets in previous times, as appears by the following distich:—

'Alma novem genuit celebres Rhedycina poetas,
'Bubb, Stubb, Grubb, Crabb, Trapp, Young, Carey, Tickel, Evans.'

CHAPTER II.

1780—1781.

Miss Sophia Lee—Chapter of Accidents—Riots, 1780—Manager in Distress—Miles Peter Andrews—Wilson—Baddeley—Miss Harper—John Bannister, the Genius of Nonsense—Doctor Graham—Visit to Wynnstay—Private Performances—Wynnstay Actors—Bunbury—New Pieces at the Haymarket—Margravine of Anspach—Beggars' Opera Travestied—George the younger dispatched to Aberdeen—Sir Thomas Stepney—Jewell the Treasurer—Edinburgh Theatre—Fortune's Tavern—Jewell's Miscalculation—Sundries at Edinburgh.

In the commencement of the following year, 1780, Miss Sophia Lee, so well known by her works of fiction, addressed the subjoined letter to Mr. Colman on the subject of her popular comedy of 'The Chapter of Accidents,' produced at the Haymarket theatre. It was once intended to be an opera, in which the celebrated Catley was to play Bridget.

"Sir, Bath, Feb. 21, 1780.

"Any longer to conceal myself, would be failing in that confidence and respect your very polite reception of my opera claims. The favourable opinion your are pleased to express, Sir, highly flatters my vanity, while it conduces to my interest, and you shall find, by the deference with which I receive your sentiments, that I have not an unbecoming arrogance in maintaining my own. I am very sorry it is not in my power to learn them from your lips, but have, I must own, one proof of mediocrity of talents; I mean a

little prudence, which forbids my farther sacrificing a certain object in life to an uncertain one. If you will oblige me with your objections by letter, it shall be my first care to obviate, or accede, to them.

"The letter which introduced the opera was so true an account of my situation, that it wanted only my sex and name; on only one circumstance was I not perfectly explicit, since I gave a single reason for preferring Covent Garden while conscious of two; the strong desire of seeing Miss Catley appear in Bridget, which was written absolutely for her. The infinite advantage attending this I need not, I dare say, Sir, explain to you, nor how much pleasure it would give me still to hope it.

"In my own character, Sir, I repeat my acknowledgments for that distinction shown me as an author, and in either, shall always be happy to avow what is equally an honour to yourself and me.

I am, Sir,
Your most obliged humble servant,
SOPHIA LEE."

P.S.—I will trouble you, Sir, to address any future favour to Miss Lee, at Mrs. Cruss's, King's Mead, Bath.

"As the long vacation approached," continues Colman, the Younger, "I was happy in the prospect of getting into London, although at a time when people of good taste are glad to get out of it. The capital, even when its inhabitants are beginning to fry, still has charms for a young Oxonian; and its fascinations for me lay in one of the hottest parts of its heated atmosphere.

"While coerced to purer air, I was consoled by thinking that I should soon swelter behind my father's scenes, and inhale, through all the coming

dog-days, the rancid odour of his blazing lamps in the little theatre in the Haymarket. His occasional excursions to his villa were the chief drawbacks upon these suffocating delights. I dreaded his dragging me with him upon his visits to my once favourite Richmond; whither he retreated, as often as his business would permit, to enjoy his verdant slopes, his green willows, and the refreshing breezes on the banks of the pellucid Thames. I detested all his greens but his green-room; all rural scenery which was not painted in distemper, all purling streams but a tin cascade by candlelight; and, as to refreshing breezes, so play-house mad was I in those days, that I would have solicited the privilege of *entrée* to the Black-hole in Calcutta, if it had been crammed with comedians.

"I came to town, this year, 1780, not long after the insurrection, vulgarly denominated Lord George Gordon's riots.

"On the evening of my arrival from Oxford, I dined *tête-à-tête* in Soho Square with my father; and immediately after dinner, I was in a fidget to get behind the scenes. I had made myself 'point-device in my accoutrements;' my hair was powdered and frizzled after the newest fashion, and I expected that the carriage would soon be at the door to convey us to the Haymarket. No carriage, however, had been ordered, and my father, who had given many a silent glance at my costume, and was well aware how eager I was to show off in the green-room, thought no doubt that it would be a salutary joke to mortify my coxcombry, and check my impatience;

he, therefore, drily said, that he would enjoy a cool stroll with me in St. James's Park, before he encountered the heat of the theatre. Of course I was all obedience; and so is a gentleman who is obliged to take a walk in a treadmill; for which he has not, I conceive, much more disinclination than I had for the evening promenade which was proposed to me.

"Although all scenery, except the scenery of a playhouse, was at that time lost upon me, I have thought since of the picturesque view which St. James's Park then presented: the encampment which had been formed there, in consequence of the recent riots, was breaking up, but many tents remained; and seeming to be scattered, from the removal of others, out of the formal line which they originally exhibited, the effect they produced under the trees, and near the canal, was uncommonly gay and pleasing.

"During the walk we naturally talked of the late dreadful disturbances; and on my inquiring how it affected the theatre, my father told me, that, on the seventh of June, on which day and night desolation had attained its climax, and London is said to have been seen from one spot blazing in thirty-six different parts, the receipt of his playhouse exceeded twenty pounds.

"This sum appears somewhat of the smallest for the night's receipt of a Theatre Royal in London; but how, instead of twenty pounds-worth of spectators, twenty persons, or one person, could have calmly paid money to witness, in the midst of this general dismay, a theatrical entertainment, is astonishing! Even the musicians before the curtain,

were it not well known that they fiddle nightly to earn their daily bread, must have appeared like so many Neros, playing tunes over the flaming town and enjoying the conflagration.

"This being the fourth season of my father's summer speculation, the theatre had in the course of that time been improved in its accommodation and internal appearance, and its histrionic company much ameliorated. Henderson, indeed, did not renew his engagement after the first season; and Parsons had seceded this year, although he returned in 1782; but Palmer, Edwin, and Miss Farren, three towers of strength, with the elder Bannister, Digges, and several others of value in the formation of a respectable company, who had all started with the new scheme, were still retained; while many excellent performers, in their different lines, had gradually joined them.

"The only new dramas worth notice, produced during the summer in 1780 at the Haymarket theatre, were The Manager in Distress, Fire and Water, The Chapter of Accidents, and The Genius of Nonsense. The Manager in Distress was an occasional Prelude, written by my father. It was very favourably received, and had a run; the occasional distress is supposed to arise from a detention of most of the summer manager's *corps dramatique* at the winter theatres: an apology is formally made for their absence; when certain individuals among the audience, that is, actors personating auditors, start up successively from their seats, in the Pit and Boxes, and propose various means

of furnishing nightly entertainments, to be given by the manager, without the assistance of performers.

"There was much intrinsic pleasantry in this Occasional Prelude; the folly of debating societies, both male and female, which then raged, was cleverly ridiculed. Mrs. Webb haranguing as a lady of the Belle Assemblée,* and the younger Bannister giving his admirable Imitations: all these were enough in themselves to establish the Manager in Distress as a favourite: but, besides these, the unusual effect created by performers speaking from the different parts of the house in which they were dispersed, was an attraction.

"This device of driving characters in a drama beyond the boundaries of the stage, and transporting the actors of them over the Orchestra, led the way to sundry practices of the same kind, which have in latter days been successful; it was, however, only an old trick new revived, for we may trace it up to The Knight of the Burning Pestle, by Beaumont and Fletcher, where the grocer enters, to interrupt the Prologue; and then calls up his wife and apprentice from the Pit; who both talk there, before they get upon the boards: and this, again, might have been suggested by Ben Jonson, who was fond of making performers personate a part of the audience, by bringing them upon the stage to criticize a new play during its progress.†

* The Belle Assemblée met, to the best of my recollection, at the famed Mrs. Cornely's, in Soho Square. Carlisle House, the scene of these nocturnal revelries, is now pulled down.

† See three of his comedies. The Staple of News, Every Man out of his Humour, and The Magnetic Lady.

There may be other instances still earlier; but I do not, at present, recollect any.

"Fire and Water, a musical piece, in two acts, the production of Miles Peter Andrews, a dealer in gunpowder, conjured up such combined ideas of incendiaries on one hand, and military operations on the other, of engines from the Insurance Offices, to quench conflagrations, and the discharge of muskets to quell a mob, that many persons were indignant at the title; considering it as the announcement of a dramatic *mauvaise plaisanterie*, allusive to the recent riots, which certainly were much beyond a joke. But the author averred that 'there was no such stuff in his thoughts;' and that he had written and entitled his farce just as he had made and sold his gunpowder, that is, long before the disturbances had occurred. Whether this declaration, or the merits of the music and acting, for there was little merit in the writing, checked the tokens of disapprobation, I cannot say; but Fire and Water, contrary to expectation, and to the usual consequence of these elements coming together, did not produce a hiss. The piece was repeated many times during the season in which it was produced; since which it has taken a comfortable nap upon the prompter's shelf, and nobody has ever thought of disturbing it: even the fond author could in justice only heave a sigh over its repose, and say in the words of Lady Anne Bothwell's Lament,

'Balow, my babe, lie still and sleep!'

"Miss Lee's 'Chapter of Accidents,' long and justly rated as a stock comedy, is so well known

that it is quite needless to expatiate upon its merits; but the excellent acting in it throughout, on its first production, may partly show how the Haymarket company of performers had improved since the first year of my father's management. In the original cast of this play, we find the potent names of Palmer, as Woodville; Edwin, as Jacob; and Miss Farren, as Cecilia; nor should Aickin be forgotten, as Grey; nor even Mrs. Love, in the minor part of the housekeeper. All these started with the new scheme, in addition to whom there were, in this same comedy, Bensley, Wilson, Bannister, junior, Lamash, Mrs. Cuyler, and Mrs. Wilson, who had all been engaged subsequently to 1777. These last were performers of acknowledged talent, in their separate lines, except Mrs. Cuyler,* but she was a fine woman: a full-grown Irish Venus, without the Graces; and, though an indifferent actress, good enough for the indifferent part of Miss Mortimer, which was allotted to her. Bensley, who always maintained an upper rank upon the stage, both in Tragedy and Comedy, was respectable in all the characters he undertook, in spite of a stalk and a stare, a stiffness of manner and a nasal twang of utterance, which prevented his being very popular in most of them; but these drawbacks were advantages to him, in representing the buckram nobility of Lord Mortimer, in Miss Lee's play; and for the same reason his persona-

* Mrs. Cuyler is recorded to have been married to Dominic Rice, Esq., of Gray's Inn, February 21, 1778; but her name as Mrs. Cuyler, appears after this date in the play-bills.

tion of Malvolio, the starch and conceited steward, in Twelfth Night, was beyond all competition.

" Wilson was very effective as Governor Harcourt; he succeeded to Shuter's characters at Covent-Garden Theatre, and was so like him in look and person, as also in the chuckling laugh, toss of the head, and shrug of the shoulders, that the similitude, at first, Wilson being decidedly the inferior of the two, operated to his disadvantage, by exciting a painful remembrance of the lost old favourite, and a regret for his absence. Yet Shuter, I have been told, at the commencement of his career, as strongly reminded the audience of his predecessor Hippesley, as Wilson provoked a recollection of Shuter. Lamash was the prince of underling coxcombs and conceited valets-de-chambre. He was the original Jessamy, in ' Bon Ton,' and Trip, in the ' School for Scandal.' Mrs. Wilson, as Bridget, could not fail of success: she had a very pretty face, with a neat little figure; and was greatly approved in the *soubrettes*, and in characters of mixed archness and simplicity, such as ' The Country Girl,' in which Mrs. Jordan was afterwards so pre-eminent.

" Besides the performers mentioned in Miss Lee's play, as engaged after the year 1777, the following are to be added, as valuable acquisitions to the Haymarket company.

" Baddeley, of the Garrick School, a good actor, of various crabbed old men, and also the original Canton, in the Clandestine Marriage, and Moses, in the School for Scandal. Wewitzer, the best repre-

sentative of comic Jews and foreigners that perhaps ever was, or ever will be; he superseded Baddeley in this last walk, but was below par in every thing else. Mrs. Cargill, the once celebrated beauty, actress and singer; Miss Harper, soon afterwards Mrs. J. Bannister, who ranked during her professional career of sixteen years, as the first female singer in England, either on the stage, or at concerts. She made her *début*, and took her leave, at the Haymarket theatre. Too soon withdrawn from public exertion, she still continues to support the domestic character which has so long endeared her to her family and friends. Last, and certainly not least, Mrs. Webb, of corpulent memory: the original personater of O'Keefe's Mrs. Cheshire, with a banging voice, and a prodigious circumference of person. She exceeded Mrs. Davenport in size, as much as Mrs. Davenport excelled her (and, in certain characters, every body whom I remember) in her line of acting.

"Bannister, junior, whom, while detailing the *dramatis personæ* in this play, I have purposely left to the last, as I shall have more frequent mention to make of him than of the others, enacted the insipid part of Captain Harcourt; whereby he suffered the fate (not very uncommon for an actor who, before he is of age, begins his profession in London) of buckling to a drudgery very much below his innate excellence; but his abilities were then in the bud, and his line undecided; so he took, for the convenience of the theatre, any line, good, bad, or

indifferent, either in tragedy, comedy, or farce—no trifling proof of his versatility.

"After his long established celebrity, as a comedian, and the regret felt by lovers of the drama on his retirement from the stage, it is curious to recur to his earliest days in the Haymarket Theatre; when he was frequently tied to a sword, and rammed into a full-dress coat, to represent Lord Falbridge in The English Merchant, and other deadly lively characters, little above those which are called in stage language, walking gentlemen.* There was a very persevering sky-coloured suit of lace clothes, which was always lugged out of the Haymarket wardrobe for him upon such occasions; and Jack Bannister in his light blue and silver, with a sword by his side, was, to all play-goers of that time, as infallible a token of a clever young actor in a bad part, as deep mourning is the sign of death in a family; but, in the course of the same nights, when he was thus misplaced, he often performed some other character effective in itself, and rendered more so by his own powers.

"'The Genius of Nonsense,' written by my father, and produced in this same season, corroborates the foregoing statement. It was advertised as an original, whimsical, operatical, pantomimical, military tem-

* Bannister, jun., made his first appearance on any stage, 27th August, 1778, at the Haymarket Theatre, as Dick, in 'The Apprentice,' for his father's benefit. The true bent of his genius was developed by his performance of Don Ferolo Whiskerandos, in 'The Critic.'—*Biog. Dramatica.*

porary, local Extravaganza, and it was observed upon it, in some of the newspapers, that 'The Genius of Nonsense,' was the 'Nonsense of Genius.'

"The late celebrated Doctor Graham was humorously satirised in this piece; but what was somewhat remarkable was, that the Doctor himself was in the stage-box the first night, and besides the mortification of seeing his Temple of Health so masterly ridiculed, he had the additional chagrin of being refused purchasing one of the bills delivered upon the stage, as a burlesque of his own.*

"Those who cannot remember the above-mentioned Doctor, may, probably, have heard of him, as one of the most *outré* quacks, in his time. His house, or Temple, as he denominated it, was gaudily fitted up, on the Terrace in the Adelphi; there he gave evening lectures upon electricity; there he exhibited his satin sofas on glass legs, and his Celestial Bed, which was to effect Heaven only knows what; there his two porters outside the door, in long tawdry great coats and immense gold-lace cocked hats, distributed his puffs in hand-bills, while his Goddess of Health was dying of a sore throat, by squalling songs at the top of his cold staircase.

"All these matters were introduced in 'The Genius of Nonsense,' and help me in explaining the 'additional chagrin' mentioned by Oulton, which, without elucidation, would be quite unintelligible some years hence. The quack, having heard of the

* Oulton's History of the Theatres.

forthcoming satire, threatened to bring an action for a libel, and came to the theatre to collect all the evidence he could, in support of his menaced prosecution; he, therefore, protruded his arm, repeatedly from the stage-box, to procure a hand-bill from the representatives of his own porters, which they as repeatedly refused to give him.

"Bannister, junior, was selected as the speaking harlequin of this piece; in which character he was to transform himself, among other metamorphoses, into Doctor Graham, whom he had never seen, nor I believe intended to see. He doubted, perhaps, whether it might be prudent to ridicule personally upon the stage, a man who was meditating an action at law against his satirists; and thought that a broad outline, sketched after his own fancy, of any ideal charlatan, would answer the purpose; my father thought otherwise, and insisted upon a portrait of the individual empiric. The young actor, therefore, in obedience to his manager's instructions, communicated to him only on the day previous to the production of the Extravaganza, visited the Temple of Health, to bestow one transient evening's glance upon the doctor. I was delighted by his allowing me to accompany him on this expedition; we saw the Græme* go through his nonsensical solemnities, in which nothing struck me as worthy theatrical adoption, till the very same things were done on the next night after the above-mentioned cursory view of them by Bannister. His mere entrance upon the

* Spelled after the Scottish pronunciation. See 'The Lady of the Lake,' Canto II., Note 2.

scene, as the doctor was wont to present himself in his Temple, his grotesque mode of sliding round the room, the bobbing bows he shot off to the company, while making his circuit, and various other minutiæ, were so ridiculously accurate, that he surpassed his prototype in electrifying the public, and the whole house was in a roar of laughter.

"That the quack was a consummate quiz, could scarcely fail to be perceived by the dullest vision; but I accused myself of having been stone-blind to all the stage-effect producible from him, which the eagle eye of Bannister had seen through in a minute: I forgot however, that the power of genuine imitation is, in the first instance a gift, although it may be afterwards improved by study; and that one of its characteristics is the quickness of seizing upon peculiarities too slight for general observation; but which, when once pointed out, are so manifest, that we wonder how we could have overlooked them.

"The casual greetings between Jack Bannister and myself behind the scenes of the Haymarket Theatre, soon advanced to better acquaintance, in consequence of my having gone with him on his mission to the quack doctor; and although, in the subsequent autumn and winter, our different destinations kept him in the metropolis and sent me to Christ-Church, still we maintained an intercourse, as often as I stole a march, with some fellow collegian as wild and idle as myself, from Oxford to London. On these expeditions, the company of Jack Bannister, on our arrival, was always a grand desideratum; his frolicsome spirit was congenial with that of a young

'Oxonian in Town,' and his talents were a high treat: we thought ourselves fortunate, therefore, whenever we could get him to join us in the intervals of his business.

"A little before Christmas in 1780, my father made a halt at Oxford on his road to Wales, and took me with him from Christ Church to Wynnstay: that seat of festive opulence which so much delighted me; for young as I was, the kindness and favouritism with which I was received there, independently of the courtesies shown to my father, were so marked and unaffected, that I cannot recur to them, at this late day, without feelings of very grateful retrospection.

"But this my journey thither for the third, and as it happened last time, was a mixture of the allegro and pensieroso. My joyous anticipation of the Wynnstay gaieties would have blazed out upon the road, if they had not been considerably damped by the constrained manner of my father; who had not forgotten certain of my flights which had displeased him, during my visit to town in the preceding long vacation. He did not, it is true, expect me to elucidate his own definition in the *Genius of Nonsense*, of an 'agreeable companion in a postchaise,'* which is, a person who sleeps all the way and defrays half the expenses; but I was in disgrace with him, and we were therefore far from being conversational; and as constantly as we

* It was not unusual at this time to advertise for an associate on a journey, and there was a register office where people went to apply for an 'agreeable companion in a postchaise.'

began a fresh stage, my father as constantly struck up '*loora la loo*,' an attempt at an old tune, to which Gay has adapted his song of 'Early one morn a jolly brisk tar;' this melody he always executed without the words, and in so dismal a style, that there was nothing left in the name of *Gay* which could possibly be attached to the music: he generally began with *forte*, subsiding gradually with *piano*, and *pianissimo*, till at the end of a quarter of a mile, he sank into perfect silence."

Annexed is a Wynnstay playbill, which is here introduced to shew that George the Elder, and George the Younger, were amateurs and actors in the same performances.

AT THE THEATRE, AT WYNNSTAY,

On Monday, January 15th, 1781, will be presented,

RULE A WIFE, AND HAVE A WIFE.

Duke of Medina, Mr. Griffith; Don Juan, Mr. Nares; Alonzo, Roberts; Copper Captain, Mr. Aldersey; Leon, Mr. Bunbury; Cacafogo, Carter; Margarita, Mrs. Apperley; Altea, Miss E. Ravenscroft; Estifania, Mrs. Cotes; Old Woman, Mr. G. Colman; Maid, Wilkinson.

To which will be added,

BON TON.

Lord Minikin, Mr. G. Colman; Sir John Trotloy (with the original prologue) Mr. Colman; Colonel Tivy, Mr. Griffith; Jessamy, Mr. Bunbury; Davy, Sir W. W. Wynn; Mignon, Wilkinson; Lady Minikin, Mrs. Apperley; Miss Tittup, Mrs. Cotes; Gymp, Miss E. Ravenscroft.

To begin precisely at Seven o'Clock,

N.B.—No Person to be admitted without a Ticket, which may be had of S. Sidebotham, at Wynnstay.

"The male performers in the foregoing play-bill, whose names are undistinguished by the slight

courtesy of Mister, were servants, or in some sort retainers, of Sir Watkin; for instance, Carter was the Cook, 'a fellow of excellent fancy,' and really a good low comedian; this account of him, by the by, will apply equally to his public prototype Baddeley, except that the latter abandoned the kitchen before he took to the stage; whereas Carter, during the Wynnstay entertainments, was *in utrumque paratus*. Wilkinson was a stroller at the time, coming annually to Wynnstay, to do what he was wont to do, for the rest of the year on his circuit, paint scenes and daub characters as occasion required. C. Sidebotham was a relation of the butler, and Roberts an upper domestic. Meredith had been a cooper, and was a bass singer of some celebrity, Sir Watkin having caused him to be instructed in music. The vocal powers of this *bon tonnellier* were well known in certain districts of England, at Concerts and in Cathedrals. Three of the above-mentioned five, Carter, Wilkinson, and Meredith, however humble in worldly rank, were no mean auxiliaries to the Wynnstay company of amateurs.

"Of the principal performers among the ladies and gentlemen, the two Misses Ravenscroft became Mrs. Vanburgh and Jenkins; the very pretty Miss Jones, then called, from the brilliancy of her eyes, the Sparkler, married Mr. Greaves. These three ladies, all natives of North Wales, are still living. Mrs. Cotes was a Courtenay, wife of the late John Cotes, then Member of Parliament for Wigan, and afterwards for Shropshire.

"The two great heroes in my time at Wynnstay,

were Harry Bunbury, and little Bob Aldersey, as he was called, and who, they said, was like Garrick: he was punchy, like Garrick in his latter days, but in other respects, alas! alas!

" Mr. Bunbury was brother to the late Sir Charles Bunbury, and Lieutenant-Colonel, for many years, in the Suffolk Militia, under the Duke of Grafton. He, I believe, at last commanded it, but retired on the close of the first French war, and fixed himself at Keswick in Cumberland, where he died. Neither his military nor his histrionic powers were of that description to transmit his name to posterity: even now the recollection of them, and of his agreeable manners, are fading in the minds of his surviving acquaintance; but his graphic talent, so conspicuous for sportive fancy in his caricatures, as well as for elegance in other specimens of his pencil, will long preserve the memory of his genius.

" Aldersey was a barrister and commissioner of bankrupts, and afterwards a bencher of the Temple. He continued an heir apparent till after sixty, and then for a short time enjoyed the family estate. Mr., afterwards Archdeacon Nares, was then domestic tutor to the present Sir Watkin and his brother Mr. Charles Wynne, who at the time of my visits to Wynnstay was so young a child, that I remember his being permitted one day after dinner to scramble on his hands and knees across the plenteous table of his indulgent parents.

" Death, alas! has made sad havock in the Cambrian Company, of which I was a member! inso-

much that the foregoing extracts which I have given from printed authorities in the Wynnstay theatrical archives, might serve almost as well for bills of mortality, as for bills of the play.

" It was late in January 1781, when I returned from Wynnstay to Oxford, whence, in the ensuing long vacation while the dog-star raged, I revisited the deserts of London, to enjoy another summer's suffocation in my father's theatrical hot-house.

" My journey, at the beginning of the vacation, was in the company of a young college friend, who was afterwards a clergyman, and of whom hereafter; we clubbed in the expenses, and were conveyed from stage to stage, through the pride and aristocracy of our under-graduated hearts, from Oxford to our separate homes, by means of a hack post-chaise and pair. Having passed the Lodge, and driven through the avenue to the Bishop of London's palace at Fulham, I set down my friend at the Bishop's, his father's gate, and proceeded to my own paternal habitation in Soho-square. During the vacation I frequently visited Lowth at Fulham; but our intercourse, from that time, ceased from my never returning to Oxford, and my unwilling emigration to Scotland, which followed in the same year.

" During the season 1781, the chief Haymarket novelties were (I do not give them in their regular succession) ' The Dead Alive,' and ' The Agreeable Surprise,' two farces by O'Keeffe; ' The Baron Kinkvervantkotsdorsprakengatchdern,' a musical comedy, by Miles Peter Andrews; ' The Silver

Tankard; or, the Point of Portsmouth,' a musical farce, by Lady Craven; and the Burlesque Ballet of 'Medea and Jason.'

"Of these, the first two mentioned farces succeeded as they deserved; most particularly the last, in which Edwin's Lingo was so irresistibly comical, Mrs. Webb's Mrs. Cheshire so broadly effective, and Mrs. Wells's Cowslip so beautifully silly, that these supports of an eccentric author's excellent fun carried all before them. This was as it should be; for what does this kind of entertainment mean but pleasant absurdity? It pledges itself for nothing more: yet how many fastidious coxcombs come and condemn it, only because it is as extravagant as its very term, farce, implies? Why not they in their sapience, keep away, when they are modestly forewarned of what they are to expect, and make room for those who love 'laughter holding both his sides?' If indeed the nonsense be really dull, down with it at once; but a score of pedants, fine leather-headed, hissing hypercritics, dispersed through a theatre, have driven many a good farce on its first night off the stage.

"The musical comedy of 'The Baron,' with a long hard German name, taken from a novel, of the same title, written by Lady Craven, afterwards Margravine of Anspach, was played during three nights of tumultuous disapprobation, and then withdrawn.

"'The Silver Tankard,' contained nothing palatable to the audience; and the second title of the piece, 'The Point of Portsmouth,' threatened that

failure which came to pass, if only from the fair authoress's ignorance of the spot in which she had very strangely placed her scene of action.

" The Margravine frequently observed of herself, that she ' was bred in Courts,' but, to pourtray the humours of the Point at Portsmouth with any verisimilitude, she must have been brought up in alleys ; and had she been competent to the task, the fidelity of delineation would have been offensive to delicacy. Her Tankard, at the end of six nights, was put upon the shelf; thus, in one short summer, she suffered under literary disgrace, both *per alium* and *per se;* indirectly, in the first instance, through Miles Peter Andrews, who dramatised her writing; directly, in the second, through her own attempts at writing a drama.

" Medea and Jason was the burlesque of a grand serious Ballet, then acting, with great applause, on the other side of the way at the Italian Opera House. This satirical dumb-show, which made a hit, required extraneous performers, of whom Delpini, the popular clown of his day, was the head.

" One great attraction of the season was that monstrous exhibition, ' The Beggars' Opera reversed ;' represented August 7th. This was a kind of theatrical world turned upside down, in which the men and women exchanged characters; Macheath was performed by the lovely Mrs. Cargill; Filch, by pretty Mrs. Wilson; Peachum, by a Mrs. Lefevre; Lockit, by Mrs. Webb; old Bannister and Edwin were the Polly and Lucy; Wilson, Mrs. Peachum; Parsons, Diana Trapes; and so on through the whole

dramatis personæ. This travesty was introduced by an occasional Preludio, as it was called, said to be written by George Keate, which was sprightly enough, but some of the jokes in it are extremely gross; the Biographia Dramatica quotes them; and tells us that the subject was 'very well handled, and *neatly pointed.*'* The most whimsical part of this prelude is the second scene, in a coffee-house, which was borrowed, if not chiefly translated, without any avowal of its obligations, from one of the Proverbes Dramatiques, called '*Les Foux.*'

"The manager's appetite must have been extremely keen when the 'sacred hunger for gold'† induced him to bring upon the stage the indecorous catchpenny of the reversed Beggars' Opera. It may be doubted, but bold is he who will be responsible for the caprices of any age, past, present, or to come, whether the existing taste of society would tolerate, throughout the whole play, so complete a perversion of the sexes;‡ or whether theatrical despotism be now so strong as to force a large body of performers into such a simultaneous transformation, since it is difficult to suppose that they were all volunteers in this nauseous entertainment. Many of the actresses for instance, must have been conscious of their want of symmetry for male attire; trowsers were not then in fashion; nor were boots furnished for

* For George Keate, styled F. R. and moreover A. S. S.—and also for his Preludio, see *Biog. Dram.* Vol. I., p. 177–178.

† ——— "quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames! VIRGIL, ÆNEID 3.

‡ It has been tried again once, and lately, for a benefit at Covent Garden Theatre—and justly exploded.

gentlewomen upon low salaries; those females, therefore, who could not afford the last articles appeared not only *en culottes*, but in silk stockings; and certes among the she-highwaymen belonging to Macheath's gang, thus accoutred, there were, to quote the song of Jemmy Jumps, in 'The Farmer,'

Six feet ladies,
Three feet ladies,
Small legg'd ladies,
Thick legg'd ladies,

all with horse-pistols in their hands, screaming, 'let us take the road!' a feminine phalanx which constituted, as Macheath himself says of the Judges in the Old Bailey, 'a terrible show!' As to men, representing Jenny Diver, &c. &c. *proh pudor!* let me drop the curtain.

"In the autumn of this year, an event occurred which produced a material revolution in my 'May of Life.'

"The Haymarket Theatre had closed, the Oxford Term was approaching, when, lo! it pleased my father that I should keep Oxford Terms no more, nor enter London Theatres, for at least some seasons to come; in short he banished me to Scotland; and sent me to King's College in Old Aberdeen, escorted thither, whether under convoy or custody was somewhat equivocal, by the Chancellor of his Haymarket Exchequer, Mr. Jewell.

"On my arrival there I was to be turned over to the *surveillance* of Professor Roderick Macleod, but not to dwell in his house, with whom arrangements had been made, by epistolary correspondence. This was a just sentence, or rather a well-intended parental measure, to remove me from scenes of idleness

and dissipation, which not only London, but even Christ-Church, presented to those who sought after them, and into which I had been rushing *con gusto*. Alas! this happened too late: a dramatic fever, not to be subdued by the cool temperature of Northern climes, was already lurking in my veins, it lay dormant for the first months of my exile, and then began to rage.

"Should the reader expect me to detail the immediate causes of my enforced sojournment in the Land of Cakes, he will be disappointed. I am not sitting down at this time of day, for the simple and tedious purpose of registering all my wild oats seed by seed; suffice it to say, that, in scattering this kind of grain, I have seldom failed to reap, as in this instance of my exile, a plentiful crop of vexation; and that I think my early freaks and follies may, without any great stretch of charity, be attributed to the general heyday of youth, rather than to radical vice in the individual; at least, I satisfy my own conscience in these particulars, upon calm revisal, after a completion of my thirteenth *lustrum*.

"My father's financier and I started for Aberdeen in a hack post-chaise and pair. We left London at the fall of the leaf, when my companion's lower habiliments appeared somewhat shivering for the season, and an excursion to northern latitudes, consisting of thin nankeens, and light blue silk stockings, a costume maintained by him for many years, and all the year round; and in which I should pronounce him to have been absolutely singular, if my old acquaintance, the late Sir Thomas Stepney, had not been super-eminent for his pertinacity in the

same articles of apparel.* Jewell, however, wanted both rank and resolution for further peculiarities; he durst not venture on the remarkable squareness of coat, nor the black pancake which represented a hat upon the body and pericranium of Sir Thomas. As to the rest, therefore, he was clad like myself, who travelled according to the dandyism of that day; *videlicet*, a frock coat with gilt buttons, and large flapping lapelles; a cocked hat, powdered hair, tied behind in a queue, with curls in rollers; a frilled and ruffled shirt, very tight leather breeches, and boots, worn, as Falstaff says, 'like unto the sign of the leg.' I mention these trifles only to mark the fashions of the year 1781.

"Certain wiseacres of my father's councils, predicted that, when we had got about half way, I should give Jewell the slip; but I had no such intention, and if I had, whither was I to go, or how escape starvation? for, although I was to have a moderate annual allowance, at Aberdeen, to be doled out to me in quarterly driblets, by my superintending professor, old Rory Macleod, still the Haymarket Treasurer was purse-bearer on the road, and I had not a *sou*.

"Our first parents had 'all the world before them where to choose,' but then there was nothing to be paid for on their journey; whereas, in later times, horses, carriages, turnpikes, if you ride, and even hedge ale-houses, if you go on foot, are awkward requisites for a traveller, without a penny in his pocket.

"Other motives also restrained me from playing

* Gillray has perpetuated the form and costume of Sir Thomas, in one of his celebrated productions.

the Man of Finance a slippery trick: we had cultivated, during the preceding summer, a familiar intercourse with each other, which arose, I think, from a little self-interest, on both parts; but which made me look upon him rather as my kind companion than my *custos*. I had found him extremely obliging to me, in respect to those occasional small loans so convenient to most young Oxonians, in their visits to London; and he, probably, though no Machiavel, was politician enough to be more prone to accommodation to me, for he was not so to others, by speculating upon the chances of my becoming, sooner or later, Sovereign of the Haymarket Theatre, when his continuance in office would depend upon my sole will and pleasure. This event did afterwards occur; and he found, to the increase of his contentation, and to the decrease of my revenue, that his treasurership, under the young king, was much more productive than in the reign of the old monarch.

"We proceeded sociably, and refreshed merrily, notwithstanding my banishment, wherever we took up our rest for the night, on the high road to Aberdeen, by Ware, Worksop, and Boroughbridge. In passing through Northumberland, you obtain more than a *soupçon* of the Scottish borders; but a young traveller is always agog for wonders: the moment, therefore, that we had crossed the Tweed, I gaped at men, women, and children, as if they had been oran-outangs; and my expectations were greatly let down on finding just the same sort of human beings, in appearance, at one end of Coldstream Bridge, as I had seen at the other.

" At Edinburgh, we made a halt of three or four days, putting up at an obscure inn in the old town. Of course, we saw all the lions of the place, and went to a play. The theatre could not then boast the best of performers: it was in the hands of Jackson, the actor, whose name would have been forgotten long ago, if Churchill had not, in the later editions of the Rosciad, transmitted to posterity the glare of his countenance and the discord of his voice.

" Jackson was married to a lady who had undertaken an upper line of acting at Covent Garden, with little more popularity or permanence of engagement, than her husband had before experienced at Drury Lane.

" Jewell, who had been Foote's treasurer, when he had the Edinburgh theatre, was as opposite to his old master in profusion as he was below him in intellect, which is saying very much, remembered a celebrated Tavern called Fortune's, in the old town of Edinburgh: ' There,' quoth he, on the eve of resuming our journey towards Aberdeen, ' there we will dine to-day; and see what a number of excellent dishes we shall have, with all sorts of French wines, for nothing in comparison, as a body may say.'

" I was a little surprised at his proposal of such a luxurious dinner, till I recollected that, in the first place, it was to be miraculously cheap, and that, in the second, whether cheap or not, it would be eaten at my father's expense.

" On entering the tavern, we were conducted into a small apartment, which was, however, large enough for a *tête-à-tête*. In five minutes, our repast, which Jewell had previously ordered, was served up. Mr.

Fortune, as we called the new existing landlord of the old firm, came flourishing into the room with the first dish, followed, for Fortune hath always many followers, by five waiters. I whispered to my companion that all this parade threatened expense; he acknowledged that things were improved in style since he had dined in the house, but relied firmly on the ancient regime, and the reasonable rates of a Scottish market.

"We had, after our soup, fish, fowl, flesh, game, *entremêts*, and pastry; all admirably cooked and excellent in quality; but in such quantity, that the board appeared to groan under the weight of provisions; and I said to Jewell,

'Tis not a dinner, 'tis a hecatomb.

Jewell had never heard of a hecatomb, and when I explained to him that it was the sacrifice of a hundred oxen, he observed, pettishly, for he was sore at any fault being found with the house he had recommended, that he did not see a bit of beef upon the table. Other cattle, I told him, came to the same thing; he knew nothing of discriminative definitions; the hecatomb stuck in his throat, and he continued to grumble 'oxen,' till a glass or two of champagne had helped him to digest the whole hundred.

"Our dinner was followed by a dessert and claret; the last article was then at so low a price generally in Scotland, that, after we had finished one bottle, Jewell manfully rung the bell for a second; and with it ordered pen, ink, and paper: these being placed before us, he further told the waiter to bring the bill: 'And now, my dear sir,'

said Jewell, 'as this is our first stop of a day or two on the road, let me advise you to take this opportunity of writing a penitential letter to your father: tell him you will turn over a new leaf, particularly on the score of your extravagance; depend on it, it will shorten your banishment.'

"The foregoing oration is superior to the every-day style in which Mr. Jewell was wont to deliver his sentiments; he was remarkable for that figure of speech which is denominated slip-slop; and I am much indebted to him for furnishing me, though unconsciously, with various expressions which I have put into the mouth of Daniel Dowlas, in my comedy called 'The Heir at Law.'

"I differed from my adviser, in respect to the fitness of time, place, and circumstance, for penning a contrite epistle; not being of opinion that sitting at my age over claret and a dessert, in a tavern, after a profusion of viands, made-dishes, and champagne, was quite consistent with professions of penitence and promises of economical reform; however, I buckled to the work: sipping and dipping, between the wine bottle and ink-bottle, alternately.

"Having finished my letter, I looked up, and found that, while I had been writing, the waiter had given Jewell the bill: it appeared to be a long slip of paper, for a dinner which was to cost 'nothing in comparison, as a body may say:' he was perusing it with his under-jaw dropped, and a countenance completely proving how correct an observer our mighty bard was of nature when he wrote, 'it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room.'

" 'Zounds!' bellowed Jewell, 'here's a dinner bill of five guineas, for two persons!'—'And there,' said I, giving him my letter, 'is repentance for profusion, and promise of economy, for the future.' 'Scandalous!' continued he, harping on the high charges, 'what am I to say in handing them over to your father?' 'Tell him,' I answered, 'that you will turn over a new leaf, particularly on the score of your extravagance.'—'Poh!' cried he, 'that is a sneer at my good advice, to shorten your banishment.' 'I wish, with all my heart,' returned I, 'that it could shorten the bill.'

" Instead of the good old Scottish mode of charging so much a-head for eating, the account was spun out, item by item; and the bill was in fact as high as at the most expensive tavern in London.

" The playhouse treasurer would have made a scene of this; had I not exerted myself to prevent him, he would have broken the bell-ropes to order up the landlord, that he might rail at fortune. Our 'dreadful reckoning' was ultimately discharged by my companion, with angry comments upon the *tempora mutantur*, violent expressions as to extortion, and a declaration upon oath that he would never enter the house again; a threat not very formidable, as the chances were that he never would revisit it, even had things remained for ever in their primitive state of cheapness. I found, many years afterwards, upon inspecting some of my deceased father's papers, that this unlucky bill had been whelmed, by his treasurer, in a sweeping article of 'sundries at Edinburgh.'

CHAPTER III.

1781—1783.

Queen's Ferry—Perth—Brechin—Laurence Kirk—Inn, Library, and Album — Stonehaven — Aberdeen — Professor Roderick Macleod—University—King's College—Fellow Collegians—Inventory of Furniture—Charles Burney—Laird of Col—Isle of Muck—King's College Library—Lecture on Mathematics—Professor of Economy—Macleod Married—College Costume—Freedom of the City—Aberdeen Mohocks—Colman the Younger's first Ballad—His first Poem and his first Farce—'The Female Dramatist.'

"NEXT morning (we continue the narrative of the reminiscences of George Colman the younger) we resumed our way northward through Perth, &c. Seven miles from Edinburgh, we had to pass the Frith of Forth, at Queen's Ferry, about two miles across, in a wide open vessel, a kind of barge, at the bottom of which there happened to be stowed a drove of horned cattle. As it blew hard, they were not very pleasant, or safe fellow-passengers for us; but, in making the *trajet* with these quadrupeds, over whose backs we were sometimes in danger of being rolled, I could not help observing to the biped with me, 'Jewell, here 's another

hecatomb.' This joke failed, as might be expected, to produce a smile from my companion, but he was less nettled at it than hurt. 'Can't you see, my dear sir,' said he, in a deprecatory tone, 'can't you see how very sensual I am, about that confounded dinner?' 'I saw you were so, yesterday,' said I. 'I'm just as bad to day,' he returned; and as he really was very sensitive about it, which was what he meaned to express, I abstained from further allusion to the occurrence.

"After a day's journey of eighty-five miles from Edinburgh, we came, in the dark, to Brechin; a place which requires not the obscurity of night to render it dismal. Here we had a late dinner, having eat nothing since breakfast, of all that the Swan, a wretched inn, could produce; it consisted of black mutton-chops, fried, greasy, and woolly; a complete contrast to our luxurious fare of the day before! We were afterwards conducted to a double-bedded room, from which a decent English garret would have been refuge, to sleep, if we could, upon mattresses very like sacks of potatoes. As the weather was cold and damp, we had ordered fire; but the chimney, long unaccustomed to the element, afforded so much more smoke than warmth, that the window of our chamber was kept open, to prevent suffocation.

"At dawn we left our beds to rest ourselves, and were seated at the door of the Swan, in a rattling chaise, to pursue our rough route, before it was broad day. Our postillion tickled my fancy, as a good specimen of phlegm in a Scottish boor. No landlord or landlady, no waiter, male or female, made their appearance, to 'speed the parting guest,'

the post-boy—the boy, by the by, seemed to be sixty, tucked us up in the chaise, then mounted his horse, and there he sat motionless, for five minutes. I bawled out to him, at last, 'Why the devil don't you set off?' to which he answered, without turning his head, or in the least altering his position, 'I need a dram.' It was as if the equestrian statue had spoken in the burlesque of Don Juan. We waited five minutes more, when out came a raw-boned, red-haired wench, with a huge bumper of Scotch whiskey, which she administered to Sandy on horseback, who poured the draught through his marble jaws, without interchanging a word with Meggy; he then uttered some provincial jargon to the steeds, and we quitted the inn door, with no English crack of the whip, and bolt off at starting, but as if we were going to a funeral.

"From Brechin to Laurence Kirk, a paltry place; but of late years known to snuff-takers, from the neat wooden snuff boxes made there, and sent to London, where we breakfasted. A Scotch breakfast is always good; tea, coffee, or any beverage you please, all kinds of bread, honey, marmalade, new laid eggs, and delicious finnon haddocks; but plague upon their bapps, and their mutton hams! The first are a doughy sort of something, between a roll and a twist; the last have a strong smell and taste, overpowering to acute nostrils, and delicate stomachs.

"At the Boar's Head in Laurence Kirk, we broke our fast in the Library! a small room so called from there being in it a glazed book-case, filled, easily filled, with books, and mounted upon a bureau,

after the fashion of sundry snug little back parlours in England. This slender collection of volumes was a kindly gift from the late Lord Gardenstone, to amuse and cheer the traveller who baited at a lonely inn. An album lay upon the table, requesting him to insert in it any extract he chose from classical authors, or anything original from himself. The reader will anticipate how this album was abused, till it became scrawled over with ribaldry, like the panes of an inn window. The library was much improved before I left Scotland, indeed superseded, by a new built room, and a considerable addition of books.

"After Lawrence Kirk to Stonehaven, or as it is commonly called Stonehive, a sea-port of romantic misery; here we changed horses at the Mill, and were dragged at a mill-horse pace to Aberdeen.

"For many a weary-mile, from Edinburgh to my seat of banishment, the country grew more and more sterile in appearance; till from Stonehive to Aberdeen, it became naked desolation! a waste of peat, varied only by huge masses of stone, sticking up here and there in the bogs, and even in the middle of the road. Had Ovid gone this stage on his way to exile, how would the chicken-hearted poet have spun out his longs and shorts, to whimper about it, in his unmanly *De Tristibus!*

"I expected that my eyes would be relieved when we came to the parks, which they told me were within a few miles of Aberdeen; but, on reaching them, these parks proved to be a few fields of bad grass, enclosed by stone hedges.

"We had daylight enough, after reaching the New

Inn at New Aberdeen, to have gone about the town while dinner was dressing; but there came on a Scotch mist, which, we had heard, wets Englishmen to the skin; so we looked through the windows. All was dull, dull, dull! The very gaieties of sight and sound conjured up the blue devils. In an open space before us, there stood a wet-through Company belonging to a highland regiment of fencibles; these *sans-culottes* were dolefully drawn up in the drizzling rain, ankle deep in the mud, while the drone of a bagpipe, I forget whether it belonged to the regimental band, kept Maggy-Lauder-ing and *Lochaber-no-more-ing* enough to drive its hearers melancholy mad!

"Much was to be done by us before the next evening, for Jewell was then to set-off in the diligence on his return to London. On the morning, therefore, immediately following our arrival, we walked from New to Old Aberdeen, a march of only a mile, that I might be consigned to Professor Roderick Macleod.

"Sent down to Scotland as a delinquent to be reformed, I expected of course to be placed under a very rigid disciplinarian, and had pictured the professor, in my fancy, as a starch, pedantic, North Briton, the emblem of collegiate austerity. Honest Rory was just the reverse; he was a square-built person, of perhaps five-feet eight, seemingly between fifty and sixty years of age, with a ruddy, good-humoured countenance, and the manner and dress of a gentleman-farmer. He shook me by the hand, and gave me a hearty welcome, but immediately turned to Jewell, and owned that he was rather sorry for my

arrival, 'for,' said he, 'a young Englishman breeds muckle harm to our lads frae the highlands—he is allowed what I may ca' a little fortune, and sets unco' bad examples of economy.' He did not utter one word about college regulations and studies, but was anxious to settle me in comfortable apartments in the college, for which he told me I must wait; they were all with bare walls, and I must paper and furnish, before I could inhabit them. In the mean time he recommended my getting a lodging with Mrs. Lowe, who lived in the cabin, one story high, opposite to the college gate.

"It was easy to see, from the first short interview, that old Rory meaned to act towards me more as my *homme d'affaires*, than my tutor. With full instructions from him whither to proceed, we wished him a good morning—chose my apartments in the college; then to Mrs. Lowe; hired her best room; thence to New Aberdeen for an early dinner, back again to the Old Town, to take possession *chez* Madame Lowe; and now the time was come for Jewell to bid me farewell, and leave me in a land of strangers. We parted, and my spirits sank. Night arrived, and the landlady brought me up one tallow candle, which she said would make me cheerful. I looked round the whitewashed room; a truckle-bed stood in the corner of it; some square bits of peat smouldered on the pavement of the fireplace, which had no grate; the wind began to rise, the hail to pelt, and the curtainless window to rattle. I thought on Mary Queen of Scots, when 'the walls did but echo her moan;' then on Bobadil, in Cobb's House. I was wretched, and as the best remedy

against wretchedness which I knew then, or know now, is to go to sleep as fast as you can; I undressed myself, turned down my tallow-candle, for want of an extinguisher, and into bed.

"There are two towns of Aberdeen, the Old and the New. In each of these there is a University, each University consisting of one College, and each making a very inferior appearance in the eyes of an Oxonian, or a Cantab. To that of the Old Town mere boys pour in from the Highlands, and other parts of the country, and sojourn there for five months annually; the remaining seven months being a period of uninterrupted vacation. They occupy almost unfurnished rooms, with bare walls, huddling two, three, and sometimes, perhaps, four in a bed. The accommodation of my Scotch servant, who had a room and bed to himself, exhibited a luxury which excited their envy. They commence with the very rudiments of Latin and Greek, proceed to Mathematics, and in four years these young gentlemen, having begun and finished their education, are created Masters of Art, or even dubbed Doctors, if they choose, at the age perhaps of sixteen or eighteen, without any intermediate degree. The University of the New Town I understood to be conducted on the same principles. Let it be remembered I have given an account of the state of things as they were when I happened to see them. They may since have been amended; we live in an age of improvement, but it is to be doubted whether the advancement of an Aberdeen University has, of late years, been rapid.

"As for the small college to which I was con-

signed, it stands a few yards from the road side; yet, although it boasts to be a university in itself, may easily escape the particular notice of a traveller, posting through the city. Gibson, in his additions to Camden's Britannia, observes, King's College, 'for neatness and stateliness much exceeds the rest of the houses; one side is covered with slate and the rest with lead.' The combination of neatness and stateliness is rather startling; 'tis like talking of a full-dressed quaker; but to state that King's College, a university *per se*, exceeds the rest of the houses in stateliness, and such houses as those of Old Aberdeen, alas! is saying little. But then, one side was covered with slate and the rest with lead! 'Prodigious!' as Dominie Samson says. How such magnificence was distributed, Gibson does not precisely inform us; nor do I recollect having been high-minded enough to take due note of the roofs; the cheaper slate probably was chosen in olden times to shelter the young students, while lead was more appropriately lavished upon the grave heads of the community.

"It may be supposed that the society of such a horde of young barbarians, migrating from their mountains, to be half-civilized, was not congenial with my inclination or habits. They had not yet made their periodical incursion, as it wanted some days to the beginning of Term, which is on the first of November, and I should have lived, when they had effected their descent, in solitude among them, had I not very happily found two young Englishmen, residing in apartments belonging to

the same staircase as my own. Both are since deceased. One of them was Mr. John David Perkins, afterwards a Doctor of Divinity, Vicar of Dawlish in Devonshire, and a Chaplain to the King's Household; the other, Mr. Earle, son of a gentleman of landed property in Yorkshire. These two messed together, and on my arrival admitted me as a partner to their table; we thus formed a *triumvirate* club, dining every day, by turns, in each other's rooms. Our dinner was prepared by the above-mentioned Mrs. Lowe, whose usual appellation was Lucky Lowe, meaning, in vulgar Scotch colloquy, dame, or mother; and whom we drilled at last into a tolerable cook. She performed, indeed, her culinary functions, on my first day of joining the mess somewhat ignorantly, by stuffing a roasted fillet of veal with plum-pudding; whereby she obtained the temporary prefix of a syllable to her title, being called by us un-lucky Lowe, for a week after.

"We had each hired a Scotch man-servant; an article to be procured, then and there, at an easy rate in point of wages. Wine, too, was cheap: port at two, and claret at three shillings a bottle; both excellent; which is much more than could be said of the men-servants. With such an arrangement, our three *valets-de-chambre* in attendance, and our claret, we sat down rather aristocratically; except that we wanted a more spacious *Salle à manger*, and a few silver forks, instead of our steel three-prongers.

"In about a week or ten days, I had got out of

Lucky Lowe's cabin, into my new apartments; which were exactly upon the same plan as those of my new English friends: a small sitting-room, and a light closet to sleep in for myself, with an adjoining room and closet for my servant; these were obtained at so inconsiderable a rate that it did not quite amount to the annual salary of the great President Boetius*. My furniture was all second-hand, and undoubtedly not superb, *videlicet* the inventory.

IN SITTING-ROOM, PAPERED YELLOW, WITH BLUE DOTS.

One Scotch carpet;—Four stained wood chairs, with cane bottoms;—Two elbow ditto, ditto;—One walnut dining-table;—One mahogany Pembroke ditto;—One looking-glass, 2 feet high, 1 wide;—One grate;—One fender, ditto shovel, ditto tongs, ditto poker;—Two dimity window curtains, two Venetian blinds.

IN SLEEPING CLOSET.

One Fir Bedstead, with rough-hewn Posts;—Blue check Curtains to ditto;—One Mattress, ditto Quilt, and two Blankets;—One wooden stool;—One deal board in window place, with round hole in ditto, for wash-hand bason.

IN SERVANT'S APARTMENTS.

One deal claw table;—Two wooden stools;—One bedstead;—One mattress;—One blanket;—One rug;—One poker, for bars in fire-place.

"All this property was reckoned sumptuous by the Aberdeen collegians; and I was rather proud

* Boetius, the celebrated Scottish historian, was the first president of King's College, Aberdeen; his salary was only 2*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* per annum.

of it, till I sold it by public roup, as they say in Scotland; when, after paying the auctioneer's demands for commission and all attendant expenses, my proceeds amounted to eight pounds, nineteen shillings, and sixpence.

"I must not omit to mention certain chambers on the ground floor of my common staircase, which were pointed out to me as having been very lately quitted by Charles Burney, son of the Musical Doctor Burney, himself afterwards a Doctor of Civil Law, and late master of the celebrated school at Greenwich. In those chambers he had been making his successful and laborious researches, unaided by Scottish professors, in the language of Ancient Greece; here he had shut himself up, not in Ancient Greece, but in Old Aberdeen, for I believe two or three youthful years of his life; secluding himself like a hermit,* not living exactly upon a vegetable-diet, but feeding his mind upon Greek roots, which caused him at last to be reported one of the three best Greek scholars of his time in England.

"The episcopal City of Old Aberdeen has the appearance, says Johnson, of a town in decay. He

* The hermit was, in fact, a *bon vivant;* he took several frisks in the intervals of his seclusion, to Gordon Castle, whither he was invited by the late hospitable Duke of Gordon; and where, I was told, he occasionally tarried so long, that it was hinted to him his bed-room would soon be wanted by some other expected guest. This could only have happened, if it ever happened at all, through want of tact in a very young man; for he was a liberal gentleman, of independent spirit: 'I knew him well, Horatio.'

might rather have said, that it looks like a long dreary village in all the vigour of its original gloom; thinly supplied with inhabitants, and those chiefly of the poorer order. I speak of the place as I found it, eight years after the Doctor.

"The slender claim to admiration which the cathedral, judging from its remains, ever possessed, must have been obtained, I think, by its tumbling down. Ideas of pristine grandeur are too often associated with an ancient building in ruins, and the antiquary is in haste to extol the fragments of any old church which time has crumbled, tempests have shattered, or human violence has dilapidated. The edifice above-mentioned, commonly called St. Machar's, is said to have suffered much at the Reformation, and more after the Revolution.

"I doubt whether Doctor Johnson be right in his conjecture, when he supposes that the Old and New Towns are governed by the same magistrates. At all events, during my residence in King's College, there was a very worthy old gentleman, living in the Old Town, who wore a gold chain round his neck, and whom I always understood to be the Provost. This was Mr. Maclean, the Laird of Col, one of those Scotch Western Islands, called the Hebrides.* I met him at dinner, in a mixed party, soon after my arrival in North Britain, when I had every thing to learn which

* He was, for several years, an inhabitant of Old Aberdeen, leaving his son (a captain who had served for some time in the East Indies) to govern his Hebridian territory.

appertains to the manners and etiquette of the inhabitants; and, observing that marked attention was paid to this ancient chieftain, I was desirous of getting into his good graces. Every body at table addressed him as 'Col,' which appeared to me a familiarity inconsistent with respect; but, concluding that they were all his old friends, while I was a stranger, I said to him, 'Mr. Col, will you do me the honour to drink a glass of wine with me?' He stared me full in the face, without speaking, or even deigning to give me a nod of assent. I repeated my proposition; 'Mr. Col, do me the honour, etc.' Mr. Col maintained his silence, and did not move a muscle. 'Is he deaf?' said I, turning to a gentleman on my right hand, 'or what is the matter with him?' 'Gude troth,' he whispered, 'ye've e'en affronted him, by ca'ing him Mister:' he then explained to me that a chieftain in the Hebrides, being looked upon as a kind of petty sovereign, is always styled according to the appellation of his dominions. If, therefore, by possibility, Clapham Common could be a Western Island of Scotland, and Mr. Maclean had been the laird of it, I ought not to have called him Mr. Clapham Common, but Clapham Common, short and blunt, without any prefix or addition whatever, just as in Shakspeare's Play, Cleopatra is occasionally called, both by Mark Antony and her attendants, Egypt.

"This custom is now and then awkward, when the uncouth names given to some of the aforesaid Western Isles are considered; and a well-bred

Englishman, in accosting Scottish petty kings, feels some difficulty in pronouncing, by way of a respectful salutation, 'How do you do, Muck?'*

"Neither are Egg and Rum very lofty titles, but then, there is Mull; and when these three are mentioned together, they produce combined recollections in a Londoner who has travelled the North Road, particularly in winter, of a hot beverage comfortable to the stomach, though not grand to the mind. Sky, also excites no vast idea of landed property, nor any deep deference to the autocracy of a terrestrial proprietor.

"I hastened to repair my error, as soon as I was aware of it, and attacked the chieftain for a third time, with 'Col, allow me to hob-nob with you.' 'With all the pleasure in life, young gentleman,' roared the mighty Col, relaxing his features, and with a Highland accent, which struck me as first-cousin to the Irish brogue: and thenceforward was the Old King Col most condescending, and even attentive, to the Younger Colman. I once sent to him, late at night, when I was laid up by a fever, for a little Lisbon wine, of which I could get none in the town, and which had been prescribed to me, as the best to be taken in whey; my servant returned to me with a bottle of it, and, with the Chieftain's compliments, expressing his regret that he had but

* On reference to authorities, I find that the laird of this place, thinking the appellation too coarse for his island, likes it still less for himself, and he is therefore addressed by the title of Isle of Muck. I cannot help thinking that this title is not less coarse, but more ludicrous.

two dozen more, which should all be sent to me early in the morning, and he hoped it would do me good. This little trait of generous kindness, characteristic, I believe, of Highland chiefs, even in the rude times of their ferocity, had an Uncle Tobyism about it, which speaks much more home to the human heart than all the 'obliging inquiries' with which invalids are flattered in London. Having no need of the proffered present, I did not accept it, but I was not the less grateful.

"That persons above the level of general society should be tenacious of their rank and titles is natural enough; and without similar feelings in every class of civilized men, according to their graduated stations, we should soon have to deplore that

> 'The Falcon, towering in his pride of place,
> Was by the mousing Owl, hawk'd at and kill'd.'

"King's College boasts a very good library, to which I was allowed free access; and was most liberally permitted to take books from it, into my own apartments, upon the promise of returning them undamaged, in a reasonable time. Availing myself of this privilege, I pored over many volumes, laboured at Latin and Greek, and hammered at classics, whom at first, I feared, I should never understand. But here I discovered, that however idly a boy may have rubbed through a public school, he leaves it with more rudimental knowledge sticking to him than he is aware of; and without this, I could not have entered upon the course of private reading which I had undertaken; it is impossible for a solitary adventurer to navigate the dead sea of

languages, unprovided with the rudder and compass of syntax and grammar.

"By devoting two or three hours every day to such literary pursuit, during the chief part of my stay in Scotland, and by continuing the same practice for some years afterwards in London, I more than made up my time lost at Westminster and Oxford; and, on comparing the extreme indolence of my earlier days with my subsequent industry, it looks as if I had gone to those last mentioned seats of erudition not to learn what they profess to teach, but to learn just as much as might enable me to teach myself.

"The remission of discipline in King's College, where I had dreaded the utmost severity, was extreme: indeed towards a young Englishman there was no discipline at all. At the commencement of Term, an acute frosty-faced little Doctor Dunbar, a man of much erudition and great good-nature, told me, instead of saying I was placed in the class over which he presided, that he hoped for the pleasure of seeing me at his *lactures*. 'On what may you lecture, sir?' said I to the Doctor. 'Greek,' he answered, 'and mathematics.' I declared mathematics to be my utter aversion, and that I never could endure them at Oxford. 'Hoot! hoot' said the little Doctor, 'gin ye come aince to my *lacture*, ye'll find me mak' mathematics sae entertaining, that ye'll nae be able to keep awa'.' I did attend this worthy man for a few mornings, when he addressed himself pointedly to me, in preference to all the other students, and then I totally deserted him.

"He afterwards invited me to breakfast with him, when he mildly asked me why I had absented myself from his class. I said, carelessly, in reference to his promise of entertainment, that he had not kept his word with me.

"The complacent smile with which this very impudent speech was received, and the complete toleration of my insubordinate conduct, for which I should have been expelled at Christ Church, sufficiently show how much my father had been misinformed when he sent me to King's College as to an academical Penitentiary: its doleful location, however, was in itself a punishment; my sense of which I always expressed to him, in my letters, by three large notes of admiration, after the date of place: as thus:

"ABERDEEN!!!"

"In respect to Professor Roderick Macleod, as my quarterly allowance came through his hands, I visited him frequently; not only to receive my payments, but sometimes to procure an advance, and sometimes, soon after my arrival in Scotland, to consult him upon matters of expenditure, chiefly the purchase of apparel; in which he always was ready to be my agent, and chuckled when he heard I had nicknamed him the 'Professor of Economy.'

"However irreverent this appellation from pupil towards tutor, certain it is, that honest Rory never dreamed of teaching me anything but how to live within my income; a science for which I had no more genius than for mathematics, and I failed as much in observing his darling maxim of 'a baubee saved is a baubee got,' as in surmounting Euclid's

problem called the Pons Asininus. But Rory was not in fact pure in his elements, he confounded shabbiness with thrift, and was for sacrificing comfort and cleanliness to frugality. He advised me for instance, and advised in vain, to wear linen coarse enough to rub off my skin, and to change it only twice, or at the utmost three times a week. In opposition to this system, I appealed so strongly to his gentlemanly pride or shame, that he actually admitted it would be better if those parts of a shirt which are most exposed to view consisted of finer materials than the rest.

"There is no accounting for the inconsistencies of mankind! Who could imagine that old Rory Macleod, in the teeth of all his habits and professions, and on the verge of three score, would have fallen into the extravagance of taking to his parsimonious bosom a young wife? Yet so it happened, yea, happened while he had three lads under his care, myself, and my young friends Perkins and Earle, to keep his doctrines alive in his mind, by giving him most abundant occasion for the exercise of his economical precepts: and, then, there were 'rings, and things, and rich array,' to be purchased for the bonny bride. The Sacrist of the College Chapel, who liquored his boots, rubbed down his Highland pony, and thrashed his walnut tree, was to be superseded by a gawky in a green jacket, and a red cape, who smeared whatever he touched, and broke a world of glass and crockery; in addition to Mause, who had, for five and twenty years, made her master's bed, and his barley-broth, and had been his maid of

all work, a *femme de chambre* was to be hired, to wait on young Mrs. Professor Macleod; then the house must be new painted, and worst rub of all! partly new furnished; the bridegroom's wardrobe, too, besides a new suit for the wedding, was to undergo a thorough scouring, that he might look gallant and gay, at least during the honey-moon. I say nothing of the laugh among his neighbours, which was all at his expense.

"On the day preceding the nuptials, some wag, a rare commodity in that part of the world, sent him the following three lines from Chaucer's January and May—

> Aviseth you, ye ben a man of age,
> How that ye entren into marriage,
> And namely with a young wif and a faire.

"But he defied squibs—he had anticipated the gossips' talk, and said it would only be 'a nine days' wonder. Yet, in such a retired nook as Old Aberdeen, where population is scanty, and food for tittle-tattle is scarce, Rory furnished the *gude-folk* with wonder for much more than nine days. At the end of nine months, indeed, his marriage was not eventful enough to protract their amazement.

"Finding myself emancipated from all College duties, I had no further occasion for the scholastic gown which had been made up for my attendance at lectures, and which I had only worn five or six times: it was of the same cut and colour as those of all the Scotch students, though vastly superior in texture and amplitude, being a large cloak of superfine scarlet cloth, like the *red roquelaure* of an old

gentleman in former days. I had profited so far by old Rory's lessons, as to think that this splendid toga should not be entirely thrown away; I, therefore, ordered it to be metamorphosed into a coat of the newest London fashion known to a north-British tailor; and persuaded my two young English companions, who had similar cloaks, similarly thrown by, to follow my example. In these fiery habiliments, we took our morning walks to New Aberdeen, to parade backwards and forwards on a wide square surface, in the centre of the town, called the Plain Stones; a kind of uncovered exchange, where

'Merchants most do congregate;'

appearing as we wore unsportsmanlike cocked hats, with our red coats, like three mad members of a hunt, to the astonishment of all the sober citizens.

"There was no mighty moral turpitude in this, but it exposed the laxity of government in King's College, when English boys were suffered to abandon their studies, and misuse their academical garb. It was also a piece of coxcombry, originating no doubt in myself, glaringly out of place in the midst of a commercial and corporate town; and particularly ill-timed, after I had recently received a very flattering mark of attention from the chief magistrate: for, be it recorded, that, I had scarcely been a week in Old Aberdeen, when the Lord Provost of the New Town invited me to drink wine with him one evening in the Town Hall: there I found a numerous company assembled, and, taking my seat at a long table, was wedged in between two officers of a fencible regiment; a novel situation, which appeared

to me very awkward, as those gallant gentlemen were in the Highland costume, which disdains a part of male dress indispensable in every society to which I had previously been accustomed. The object of this meeting was soon declared to me by the Lord Provost, who drank my health, and presented me with the freedom of the city. My countrymen, Messrs. Earle and Perkins, who had arrived in Scotland several months before me, had already experienced this civic courtesy. Bestowing upon three such raw subjects the same honour which had been conferred upon the celebrated Johnson, as a tribute to his learning, genius, and morality,* can only be considered as an intended compliment to the English in general; it could not possibly have arisen from respect for any meritorious qualities in the youthful individuals.

" The adoption of so remarkable a uniform as that which I have described, by three English students in a Scotch College, procured for us more notoriety than reputation; and our frequent tavern dinners in the New Town, while at a dead weekly expense for Lucky Lowe's cookery in our rooms, had the same tendency. On our return homewards,

* " On Monday we were invited to the Town-Hall, where I had the freedom of the city given me by the Lord Provost. The honour conferred had all the decorations that politeness could add, and what I am afraid I should not have had to say of any city south of the Tweed, I found no petty officer bowing for a fee. The parchment containing the record of admission is, with the seal appending, fastened to a riband, and worn for one day by the new citizen in his hat."—*Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.*

too, from those dinners, we had been several times annoyed by a party of choice spirits, who paraded streets at nights, upon principles more liberal than those of the patrol; for, instead of receiving pay, as a half efficient guard to the timorous passenger, they generally quieted all his fears at once, without fee or reward, by knocking him down, and leaving him senseless on the ground.

"This knot of ruffians, who had become a nocturnal terror, like the Mohocks whom we read of in the Spectator, we were determined to chastise, and, if we could, entirely suppress, for this purpose we often marched from our College at midnight, and proceeded to the New Town, attended by our servants, thus making six in number, all armed with bludgeons, to retaliate upon our aggressors. This act of ultra-justice, which increased the disturbances it pretended to put down, brought us into still further disrepute; and, I know not how it was, whether from making more bluster, or having more animal spirits than my companions, but so it happened that I was always considered the ringleader in these quixotical sallies; insomuch that I became pointed at by the lower order of Aberdeenites, who distinguished me by the appellation of the Muckle De'il, Anglicè the Great Devil.

"Three months of my sojournment were not over, when the morning walk, southward, to loiter in the New Town, or northward, to look over the Brig of Don,* grew wearisome in the extreme; this

* The bridge at Old Aberdeen, a little way out of the town,

routine, therefore, was occasionally broken by excursions on horseback in company with my two brother Englishmen, when none but boys could find pleasure in galloping over a Scotch road, in a Scotch winter.

" In one of these rides or rather slides, for it was at the end of January, and the highways were one sheet of ice; we put up for the night at Laurence Kirk, which I have already mentioned, in my route from London. Here the album lay upon the table, inviting us to write therein, also, did the wretched prose and verse of many a previous traveller encourage me to scribble, and therein did I deposit, upon a profaned altar, in a Scottish inn, my virgin offering to the Muse.

" This maiden effort, a ballad, was a contemptible piece of doggerel, and, what is much worse, an attempt to ridicule the hospitable nation which, always excepting the mob of Aberdeen, had shown me kindness; a nation for which I have, now, a very great respect; but a minor wag, as I was then, in every sense of the word, sacrifices everything for what he thinks a joke.

" Bad, however, as my verses were, even one of the country which they libelled had good-nature and generosity enough, in the midst of his indignation, to bestow upon them a kind of praise: for on a subsequent visit to Laurence Kirk, I found, under

over the Don, is one immense arch of stone, sprung from two rocks, one on each side, which serve as a butment to the arch; so that it may be said to have a foundation coeval with nature, and which will last as long.

my lines, the following distich, evidently written by a North Briton :—

> ' I like thy wit—but, could I see thy face,
> I'd claw it well, for Scotia's vile disgrace.'

to which I subjoined,

> ' Is, then, a Scotchman such a clawing elf?
> I thought he scratch'd no creature but himself!'

" My disposition to scribbling would have shown itself, I suppose, at all events sooner or later; but the album, coming thus early in my way, acted as a hot-bed upon my inert propensities, which, once roused into life, continued to germinate; consequently my earliest productions were premature, and, like forced asparagus, excessively weak.

" Finding that I could tag rhymes, of which I was not quite sure till I had tried, I sat down immediately on my return from Laurence Kirk, to write a poem ; but I had the same want as a great genius,* not, then, I believe, born, and since dead. *I wanted a hero*—the first at hand. I found him in the last newspaper, lying on my table, which had arrived from London, was the renowned orator and statesman, Charles James Fox, who was then termed, in all Whig publications, ' The Man of the People.'

" I accordingly gave the same title to my poem ; knowing little more of politics and the man of the people, than of the man in the moon! In one particular of my work, I followed the example of a

* Lord Byron, see the first stanza of Don Juan.

poet, whose style was somewhat different from my own; I allude to one John Milton.

" Milton has, in most people's opinion, taken Satan for the hero of his Paradise Lost; I therefore, made my hero as diabolical as need be, blackening the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, till I had made him, only in his politics remember, as black as the devil himself; and, to mend the matter, I praised to the skies Lord North, who had lost us America!

" This notable effusion I published, but suppressed my name, at Aberdeen, in a small edition, 'for the author;' the bookseller there, I believe the only one in the town, wisely declining to purchase the copyright; of course he only sold the work by commission, leaving me responsible for the expense of printing.

" A new poem published in this corner of the kingdom was an extraordinary event, and excited some curiosity there. It was thought to contain some smart lines, and was in every body's hands; but, alas! not at all to the author's profit; the Aberdeenites were in general like Rory Macleod, great economists; the prodigal few who had bought my production lent it to their frugal neighbours; who lent it again to others, and the others to others, *ad infinitum;* so that about one hundred copies were thumbed through the town, while all the rest remained clean and uncut upon the shelf of the bibliopolist. He sent me his account, some time afterwards, enclosing the printer's bill, by which it appeared that I was several pounds debtor for the

publication; but then I became sole proprietor of all the unsold copies, which were returned to me; all of which I put into the fire save one, which happened to turn up a few years ago, in looking over old papers; I found it to be downright school-boy trash, and consigned it to the fate of its predecessors. I hope that there is now no trace of this puerile stuff extant.

"Although the accident of scrawling a song in the Laurence-Kirk Album imperceptibly led me to the press as a versifier, still the twig had been bent in a dramatic direction; and the young tree was mainly inclined to the stage.* My poem, therefore, had scarcely appeared in print, when I had finished a musical farce, which I entitled The Female Dramatist†, and transmitted to my father. It puzzled the managerial papa: he thought it had some promise, but that it was too crude to risk, as regularly accepted by the theatre; so it was brought out anonymously, on the benefit-night of Jewell, the treasurer, August 16, 1782.

"Little is expected from novelties produced at a benefit; and, considering the apathy with which they are usually received, I may without vanity state, that this farce was noticed in a very conspicuous manner, for it was uncommonly hissed in the

* 'Just as the twig is bent, the tree 's inclined.'—POPE.

† The principal character was borrowed from Mrs. Metaphor, in Smollett's Roderic Random. The Theatrical Remembrancer, compiled by Egerton, the bookseller and printer, in 1788, 12mo. erroneously ascribed the Female Dramatist to Mrs. Gardner; an error that has been continued in the last edition of the Biographia Dramatica.—Ed.

course of its performance. The audience, I was told, laughed a good deal in various parts of the piece; but there were passages in it to excite disapprobation; and much too broad to have escaped the erasing hand of the examiner of plays, in the present day. On perusing the manuscript after a long lapse of time, I threw the Female Dramatist into the flames,* as a fit companion for the Man of the People; and if this consumed couple had belonged to any author but myself, he would not perhaps have had the folly, or candour, or whatever else it may be called, to rake up their ashes.

" During all this scribbling, for, undismayed by my failures, such is the *cacoëthes scribendi*, I proceeded from a two act farce to a three act comedy; the devil must be in it if I had much leisure for getting into scrapes, and for breaking the peace, and the windows, of the Aberdeenites; especially as I had taken a fancy not only to write, but to read.

* Colman's recollection as to some matters appears to have been very faulty, or the paper on which he had written was made of the imperishable asbestos, and was not only purified by its transmission through the flames, but had absolutely become a twin phœnix, as among the manuscripts presented to the Duke of Devonshire there were two copies of the Female Dramatist, in the author's autograph.—Ed.

CHAPTER IV.

1781—1782.

Cacoëthes Scribendi—Leith Races—Pedestrian Expedition of George the Younger, from Aberdeen to Edinburgh—Disguise—Adventures on the Road—Montrose—Press Gangs—Frith of Forth—Colman in a Collier—Panorama—Kirkaldy—Leith—Disagreeable Landlady—Colman himself again—Scotch Post-chaise—Return to King's College—Play-writing—The miseries and mishaps thereof—Fatal curiosity—Prologue to Ditto, by the elder Colman, on revival at the Haymarket—Season at the Little Theatre.

"My new habits of reading and writing were not so rigorously observed as to preclude liberal relaxation: and I broke the course of my first twelve months' labours, by indulging in two short visits, of a week each, to Edinburgh. The last of these was in the summer of 1782, during the Leith race-week. The race-ground, if sands can be called ground, was on the shore of the Frith of Forth, the horses were therefore sometimes knee-deep in sand, or water, or both; and those persons who attended the sports there, and no where else, could scarcely be called men of the turf.

"Through a strange whim, the last-mentioned journey was commenced on foot. Many a man sits in his arm-chair reading fictitious adventures by sea and land, associating his fireside solace with the amusing incidents in his book, till he fancies that

nothing is so delightful as to travel and to sail. This romantic feeling is more especially prevalent in our youth, when the mind rarely, if ever, dwells with disquietude upon accounts of the casual mishaps, fatigues, hardships, and inconveniences of peregrination, though charmed with the description of nature's scenery: and my brains, when a schoolboy, had been so deliciously bewildered by Cervantes and Le Sage, to the neglect of Greek and Latin, that I longed to get into Spain, and practically to trace the devious course of Don Quixote and Gil Blas. I was for falling in with shepherds, and swineherds, and goatherds, and damsels upon donkeys, and monks upon mules, and barbers on a tour, and hermits in a grotto. I was for climbing rocks and mountains, dining by a brook, and sleeping under a cork tree; in short, I was for being at least a vagabond, if not a knight-errant.

"With these early sparks in my bosom, which had been kindled almost into a flame, by conversations upon the simple manners of the Scotch peasantry, and the sublime and beautiful of some parts of the country, I determined to sally forth in plebeian guise, and spy the nakedness of the land, most of which, Heaven knows, was naked enough!

"To effect this notable project, it was agreed between me and my friend Earle, with whom I had previously arranged to travel in a post-chaise, that we should meet at Edinburgh, instead of going thither together; he to bring my requisite apparel, in his travelling trunk, to the appointed place of meeting, while I should start as a pedestrian, to perform the exploit, exactly in a week, with only a

one pound note in my pocket. I was to be attended, or rather accompanied, by my servant, carrying a wallet, furnished with some clean shirts; the said servant to behave as my comrade, whenever we came in contact with observers. The said servant, by the by, after this expedition, turned out an 'exceeding knave.'

"I began my march at ten o'clock, on a beautiful moonlight night, in the middle of summer; my man Geordy, as he was called, trudging beside me. We were dressed in coarse jackets, Scotch bonnets, fillibegs, and tartan hose, and were to have had furloughs from an officer of a fencible regiment, in order to pass for soldiers who had obtained leave of absence, and were going Southward in their own clothes, to see some friends in the Scottish metropolis; but when we were many miles on our way, I found that Geordy had neglected to obtain the said furloughs; which, as it happened, was a matter of some importance.*

"We tramped over the rugged horrors of a road, part of which I have already described, in my journey from London; and accomplished full sixteen miles from Old Aberdeen, without stopping, except for five minutes, at a mean road-side tenement, where post-boys and waggoners watered their horses, and whyskied themselves. It was open at all seasons, in all hours; and, as I was given to understand, most crowded with customers at mid-

* I believe we could not have worn the dress above described, unless under the pretence of belonging to the Scottish regiments; the old highland costume, for the peasantry, having been abolished.

night. Its only room for all comers had a mud floor, some broken chairs, a tottering long table, and a winking lamp, boasting greater stench than illumination, nailed against the smoke-dried wall, which had once been whitewashed. This place was filled with a company resembling the marauders of Salvator Rosa much more than the boors of Teniers; some half drunk, others quite so, others vigilant, as if in expectation of prey. I thought then, as I think now, that, if the gentry whom I encountered there had suspected me to be worth robbing, they would, perhaps, have cut my throat; the surrounding country was particularly convenient for throwing a breathless body into a morass, and preventing all random records of the transaction. Such was the first specimen afforded me of those innocent swains whom I had ardently expected to find, in rambling over a Scottish Arcadia.

" On reaching Stonehive, between three and four o'clock in the morning, I avoided the Mill, where I was known, the best inn, by far, in the place, though bad was the best; and hied me to a house more unpretending in point of customers, but accounted greatly superior in dirt and discomfort. Here I was very desirous of procuring a bed, for, I was not merely tired by the length of the way, but fevered with pain from the coarse texture of the tartan hose, and a pair of thick new shoes, which had so excoriated and swollen my feet, that every step I took was torture.

" I was not, however, admitted into the last mentioned place of lowly resort. It was, indeed, broad day, but in a season when there is scarcely

any night, and at such an hour of quiet, that every portal in this obscure little maritime town was closed. I sat down upon a stone bench, outside of the Thistle, or the Jenny Cameron, or the Wallace's Head, or whatever might have been the sign; not at all smiling like Patience on a monument, and, in about a quarter of an hour, resumed my weary way.

" From Stonehive, I abandoned the interior route to Edinburgh, through Forfar and Perth, by which I had travelled when I first came from London; and pursued the road which is nearer to the coast.

" Six miles beyond Stonehive, about two-thirds of the way from that place to Bervie, on the road to Montrose, we came to an inn standing by itself; and, if an inn were merely the word by which an inn is expressed, I should have pronounced it to be as forlorn a noun substantive as a tired gentleman could hit upon in a summer's morning. It was called 'The Temple,' and had not been converted into such a den of thieves as I first entered, and have described. Here, as it was six o'clock, A. M., and the people of the house all stirring, I at last obtained repose.

" Some philosophers doubt whether the greatest of all corporal pleasure be not immediate mitigation of violent pain. I am not prepared to solve so nice a problem, but I should readily have given into their persuasion when, with aching limbs, and throbbing feet, I threw myself upon as hard a flock bed as ever could have been pressed, even by the weight of a travelling tinker.

" I arose at noon, much less punished as to body and joints in general, than I had expected; but a

foundered pedestrian cannot sleep off his lameness in the short space of six hours; and he who has happened to see a Turk under the bastinado, or a trooper standing on the picket, may form some notion of my sensations when, after having once more pulled on the horrible tartan hose, and crammed my lower extremities into the tight shoes, I recommenced my toilsome journey.

"As to my man Geordy, who had, before he entered into my service, trudged the highlands, his callous feet were little more susceptible of feeling than the claws of a dining-table.

"There was a distance of rather more than fifteen miles from the Temple to Montrose, which town it was my determination to reach, though at a cripple's pace, in the evening.

"I sat out about one o'clock P. M., in much misery, getting easier as I went on, by getting warmer, like a battered post-horse; not halting at Bervie, but halting through it, nor stopping at any house of entertainment for travellers. Occasionally we walked up to some cottage door, where the gude wife, who staid at home while her gude man was labouring in the field, would give us whey or butter-milk, and offer us oaten cakes, or whatever else the humble dwelling could afford. This hospitable custom I found to be universal among the Scottish peasantry, at least as well as I could judge in my week's wild excursion, and was one out of very few instances to realize the nonsensical notions which I had derived from a taste for the *beau idéal* of pastoral romance.

"About four o'clock in the afternoon, we came

to a brook which crossed the road, and was not then much above ancle deep; it was surmounted by a slight bridge.

" Tempted by a green field, and urged by a craving appetite, I sat me down near the margin of this rivulet, on a spot a little removed from the high-way, to dine under a stone-hedge.

" Geordy opened his wallet, and produced from it some cold ribs of lamb, a little salt screwed up in a bit of brown paper, and a small loaf of home-made bread, all purchased at the Temple. These luxuries he placed upon a white napkin, which he had spread upon the turf.

" As the grass served me both for chair and dining-table, I dispensed with the dignity of a servant waiting behind me, and even invited him to the sitting; at which he so far outdid me in making a voracious repast, that when I told him to take away, there was nothing left but the bare bones of the lamb, and a little of the salt.

" I travelled, be it remembered, with a convenient apparatus, a *multum in parvo*, containing, besides a knife, fork, and spoon, a small case bottle and a tumbler, so that I washed down my repast with some excellent brandy, diluted with water from the brook. This beverage, of which I took several tumblers, but indeed, dear temperate reader, they were very small ones, so refreshed and cheered me, *pro tempore*, that I began to doubt whether I was an ass or not, for having placed myself in such a situation.

" Spite of lameness, rough roads, high hills, and hot weather, I performed my intended fifteen miles,

from the Temple, at the rate of two miles and a half an hour, as to actual progress; to which must be added about an hour and a half more, passed in loitering at cottages, and dining *allo scoperto;* and the sun had set, after a sultry summer's day, when we entered the neat and cheerful town of Montrose. This seaport, of some consideration, is situated on the east side of the shire of Angus, upon the coast of the German Ocean, and at the mouth of the river South Esk, which constitutes its harbour. It contains some well-built houses, a town-hall, and an hospital for the poor; notwithstanding which last, it is at this place that Doctor Johnson observes, 'there are many beggars in Scotland.'

"It was not for foot-passengers in fillibegs to strut into the first-rate inns, of which there were two in Montrose, and call about them; no traveller under the dignity of an equestrian, from a commercial firm, trotting about the country upon a horse caparisoned with saddle-bags full of samples, ever frequented these hostelries, as Chaucer calls Inns of of a superior order; we therefore sought more humble accommodation; and in passing through a wynd, or side lane at the back of the main street, we observed an elderly woman who stood at the door of her lonely habitation to enjoy the freshness of the evening air. On a pane of her cottage window, in a line with the door, she had pasted a paper which announced a room to let; there was still sufficient twilight to read the inscription, and it induced me to ask her whether she could give us a night's lodging; telling her, at the same time, our ready-made story, that we were soldiers on leave of

absence, to visit our friends in Edinburgh; and adding the plain truth, that I had fallen lame on the journey.

"After a homely supper of new laid eggs and bacon, the good woman told us that she had a bed for me, and another for Geordy, in the spence. The spence, as it is termed, in Scotland, is a back parlour, generally so confined in its dimensions, as was the case in the present instance, that a stranger wonders, not at its holding two beds, but how it can hold one*. This is soon explained by pulling back sliding panels in the wainscot, or sometimes opening folding doors, behind which there are beds in recesses, looking like those constructed in small packet-boats, where passengers are stowed for the night.

"How uncertain are the events of human life! The odds were a million to one, when I got up from table in the but, to go to bed in the ben, that I should have gone to bed as I intended: I did no such thing, for, in proceeding to execute my resolves, I felt so thoroughly crippled that I declared the impracticability of continuing the journey on foot, next morning; and, therefore, I speculated, Montrose being a sea-port, upon getting some conveyance in a vessel which would land us near Edinburgh. My servant, to whom I half addressed this, as a seeming proposition to a fellow-traveller, of course gave his assent to the plan.

"'A weel,' said the widow, 'ye'll easy procure

* The ground-floor of a great number of houses, in Scotland, consists of a kitchen in front, and the spence, or parlour, at the back of it, in which last the provisions are often kept. These two apartments are contra-distinguished as the but and ben.

a passage i' the morn; for ye're baith Sogers, ye ken, and need na fash yoursels aboot the king's cutter i' the harbour.' She then explained to us that this same cutter had been, for three days, and was still, lying within the mouth of the South Esk, manned by a press-gang, under the command of a lieutenant; a formidable piece of intelligence, which made me instantly and anxiously inquire of Geordy what he had done with our furloughs; when it appeared, to our utter dismay, that the careless scoundrel had never troubled his head about them; and had started with me, from Aberdeen, without calling on the officer who had promised to furnish them. Here was a dilemma! The pretended soldiers were likely to be forced into real service, as sailors; and the probable transition from King's College to a king's ship, in order to fight, at so short a notice, His Majesty's battles against the Mounseers, the Mynheers, and the Dons, for we were, then, if I recollect right, at war with France, Holland, and Spain, appeared to me much more awkward, as a personal revolution, than my projected banishment from Aberdeen to London. In the latter instance, I should have only been thrown back upon my father's hands, who would have been in a furious rage with me; but, between a banished son and a vanished son, there is a wide difference in a father's feelings; and had I been hurried on board a man-of-war, my disconsolate parent must have accounted for my disappearance by supposing me smothered in a Scotch quagmire: as the times were gone by for being whisked away upon a broomstick, by one of Macbeth's witches.

"If I had fallen in with the rawhead-and-bloody-bones lieutenant, his cutlass in hand, and his crew at his back, there can be little or no doubt that he would have handed me over, *sans ceremonie*, to his superior officer on board some frigate, and that I should have been for a long time 'missing;' for how was I to prove to them, at the moment, or induce them to take the trouble of investigating, so improbable a tale, although it was a fact, that two apparently common Highlanders were an English gentleman and his servant, taking a week's walk together, in masquerade, with a one pound note between them?

"Luckily, the widow recollected that a vessel which had been unlading a freight of coals was to sail, on its return to the Frith of Forth, as soon as the morning tide would serve; so she hastened down to the harbour, and told us, when she came back, that one of the two men who navigated the collier was her relation; that he would take us on board at midnight, under his own particular guardianship, victual us during the day, and land us next evening at Kirkaldy, which is on the north side of the Frith, nearly opposite to Leith:

"When the town clock had struck twelve, she conducted us to the harbour, walking some paces before us, as a scout, to give the alarm in case of danger. But her precaution, as it happened, was redundant; for the moon was down, and 'not a mouse stirring.' On reaching a boat in which a boy was waiting, to row us to the ship, she wished us both a prosperous voyage.

"The exterior of the two men who received us on

board was in admirable harmony, as well as I could then see, with the dingy appearance of the collier; and no sooner had we embarked than the widow's relation, in the redundancy of his inflictive beneficence, ordered us under hatches, for our better security. I petitioned him to postpone this stifling act of kindness, as there was not yet light enough to fear that we should be discovered; and, in such a vessel, I anticipated descending into something like a coal-hole; but, no; he had promised that we should not be pressed; he was a loving monster, so down he crammed us. The place was as I expected, hot, small, noisome, and as dark as pitch; here, however, I obtained a sound sleep of more than five hours, in my clothes, upon some packages which lay on the floor; after which I was awakened, about six o'clock in the morning, by heaving the anchor; and soon perceived, from the ship's motion, that we were in progress down the river.

" By my order, Geordy mounted a short ladder, lifted up a trap-door, and then thrust his head through the aperture, at the top of our floating dungeon, to ascertain how far we had advanced, when he received so astounding a shock upon his pate, from the iron hand of our guardian, upon deck, that it tumbled him back again, into the shades below.

' It had been so with us, had we been there ;'

but I had, by chance, told Geordy to reconnoitre just at the crisis when we were passing the dreaded King's cutter, at the mouth of the South Esk; and the protecting sea-bear, who laid him low, must have had no little anxiety on our account, if his care for

our persons might be appreciated by the power of his paw.

" Having got out of the port, without let or molestation, and been nearly an hour on the open sea, where there was no appearance of any ship of war, caution itself could be no longer apprehensive: our tutelary coal-heaver, therefore, permitted us to quit our durance, *superasque evadere ad auras.* As we creeped up the ladder, out of darkness, upon deck, the scene which burst upon us, or rather, our bursting upon the scene, was extremely exhilarating, and more so from the suddeness of the contrast.

" Sun-beams danced gaily upon the waves, which a north-west breeze had put into active, but not turbulent, motion. Our canvas was all spread, and we were going merrily under a steady and favourable wind; the waters were dotted with trading vessels; the German ocean, in which we were sailing, was bounded, on our left, by nothing but the horizon; while on our right lay the land, which is always, to an inhabitant of it, a cheering ingredient in a marine prospect.

" During the first half of the voyage, we sailed due south, keeping the shires of Angus and Fife constantly in sight; which exhibited, as we coasted along their eastern borders, a much more effective variety of views, begging the managers' pardon, than any of those shifting candle-light Panoramas painted in distemper, which have been produced at the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, although the said Panoramas have very great merit. On the line of coast from Montrose to the Forth, we

passed, according to their regular order of succession, the Promontory called Red-Head, a conspicuous object far off at sea; Aberbrothick, famed for its ruins of the greatest abbey in Scotland, with the Grampian Hills at some distance behind them; the Estuary of the Tay, which river Julius Agricola, whom Camden calls the best of Pro-Prætors, under Domitian, the worst of Emperors, made the boundary of the Roman conquests in North Britain; St. Andrews, once an Archiepiscopal See, and the magnificent metropolis of Scotland, now a decayed grass-grown city, with a declining University; these are the chief places worthy of enumeration before we came to Fifeness; whence we changed our course to a western direction, at the opening of the Frith of Forth, which is very picturesque.

"A large mouth is ugly, in most instances; but the mouth of this Frith is more beautiful from being many miles wide. Near the extremities of its opposite shores, lie Crail, Kilrenny, East and West Anstruther, and the harbour of Pittenweem, in Fifeshire, on one side, and the ruins of Tantallon Castle, in East Lothian, on the other. Between these points, several little islands are scattered, the most conspicuous of which are the Isle of May, and the Bass.

"The May is on the northern side of the Frith; is about a mile long, and a quarter of a mile broad; and boasts only one constant inhabitant of the human species, the poor solitary devil who keeps up the nightly fire in the light-house, which light-house, by the by, built in the reign of our Charles the First, might have an inscription upon it, to record the

superstition of the times in which it was erected. The builder, while the work was in progress, was drowned in a storm, as he was returning, one night, to his house in Fife, from the island; for which, *horribile dictu!* some poor old women, after being pronounced guilty of raising the tempest, were condemned to death, and executed!

"Bordered both on the right and left, by a populous country, we sailed up the Forth, till we came, before sunset, to Kirkaldy. Here, as the collier had completed her voyage, I and Geordy were put into a boat, and carried three miles further to Kinghorn: from which place to Leith, on the other side of the Frith, which is here narrowed to seven miles, there is a ferry. In taking leave of our two navigators, I thanked our guardian, in particular, for all his oppressive super-attentions, which had considerably bored and annoyed me.

"On landing, we procured a couple of beds 'in the worst inn's worst room,' and early next morning walked into a barber's shop to be shaved; where I disbursed one penny to the artist who skilfully performed upon me this tonsorial operation. However small my immediate funds, I did not deem the expenditure extravagant, till Geordy's superlative genius for economy threw my notions of thrift completely into shade. He had, during the time I was under the barber's hands, shaved himself; he, therefore, insisted, with greater vehemence than success, that, although he had used the said barber's shaving implements, and materials, a demand upon him for more than half-price, that is, a halfpenny, would be gross extortion.

"While the Caledonian Dicky Gossip was smoothing my chin, he imparted news which made the hairs on my head to stand on end! Pressing, he told me, was going on very briskly in his town; a party on this service had been there on the previous day, another might come to-morrow; the place, he said, was never many days without one, and he was in the habit, lately, of seeing many of his customers taken off, as fast as he could take off their beards; in short, it appeared that there was no safety for us; and that, by coming from Montrose to Kinghorn, we had only illustrated the vulgar adage of the frying-pan and the fire, or the more classical, though equally thread-bare saying, of Scylla and Charybdis.

"What was to be done? Our day's voyage had advanced us much too rapidly on our way. We were within nine miles, seven by water and two by land, of Edinburgh; I could not go thither directly, where I was known to some few, to walk about the Scottish metropolis, habited like young Norval from the Grampian hills; and, till the arrival there of my friend Earle, who had all my clothes in his trunk, I could have no means of changing my dress. There was no way left for us, but to dodge the danger as well as we could, by avoiding the town, and the seashore, seeking the heights in the vicinity of Kinghorn, and strolling for food and lodging to such adjacent farm-houses and villages as were situated inland.

"Loitering thus about the country, for a few days, was such a repose, in comparison with the severe march I had performed on starting from Aberdeen, that I was no longer foot-sore: but,

reposing upon bare hills, beneath a scorching sun, as I sometimes did, for an hour or two at a time, produced an inconvenience which I had not foreseen. The upper portion of my English legs, unaccustomed to that space of Highland nudity which is exhibited between the fillibeg and the tartan hose, was half-broiled by the solar beams, insomuch that the effect was little less annoying than my lameness.

" Since this accident, I never refer to the alarm given after Duncan's murder, in the tragedy of Macbeth, without a tribute of admiration to the good taste of Banquo; who, although himself a Highland General, and, no doubt, inured to all weathers, advises his companions, to ' hide their naked frailties,' which he thinks must ' suffer in exposure.'

" It was time at last to leave the regions in which I had spun out the greater part of the week prescribed for the performance of my journey; and had found refuge, also, from those salt-water subalterns who illustrate the naval song, of ' Britons never will be slaves,' by forcing men from their homes and families into the sea-service. Towards the close, therefore, of the fifth day from my landing in Fifeshire, having engaged to be at Edinburgh on the morrow, I sent forth Geordy to reconnoitre; and, upon his report that the coast was clear from the enemy, I descended with him from our holds and fastnesses to the water's edge, where we mingled with a crowd of passengers in the Kinghorn ferry-boat, and were landed at Leith, in the dusk, after little more than an hour's sail.

" We took up our quarters, for the night, close to

the Quay, at an inn, or rather public-house, which Mr. Earle's servant happened to recollect, and described, before we left Aberdeen, as the place to which he would bring my clothes on coming to Edinburgh, with his master. The proprietress of this marine mansion, who, though a landlady of Leith, differed only in dialect from a landlady of Wapping, crammed us for the night into a couple of dog-holes which she called bed-chambers: they were closets, with a wretched curtainless flock-bed in each, but with nothing else whatever. On her lighting me to my kennel, I ventured to observe upon the total absence of every article for the purpose of ablution, when, telling me that there was a pump below, and a jack-towel hanging up in the kitchen, for all such 'loons' as I, she banged the door after her, and left me in utter darkness. I was forced, therefore, to creep into bed like persons who came home after the curfew had been tolled, in the unenlightened times of William the Conqueror.

"Next morning, I breakfasted by the kitchen fireside; a situation, as we were then in the month of July, only fit to solace a salamander; but the cooler latitudes of the kitchen were occupied by groupes of seafaring customers. After my breakfast, Geordy drew a comb and curling-tongs from his wallet, and, having procured a little powder and pomatum from a perruquier, who frizzled a trading ship's captain, lodging in the house, began to dress my hair, previously to the expected arrival of my wardrobe.

"This operation proceeded greatly to the astonishment of the amphibious animals then present; who

silently looked on, while the fashionable toupée, the ribbon-bound queue, and the three curls on a side, were all rapidly forming on the head of an itinerant, in a shabby jacket, and a kilt. I certainly must have presented a very heterogenous figure. Just as the grand work was completed, and I was *bien poudré*, the landlady entered, and stood aghast; at that moment, too, Earle's servant drove up to the door, in the post-chaise which had brought his master to Edinburgh. Geordy then thought fit to proclaim who and what I was, and to add, that I had been roaming over the country for a wager.

" The declaration of my being a gentleman, supported by the evidence of wearing a powdered pate, savoured of the discovery so often practised upon the stage, when a disguised hero suddenly unbuttons his surtout, and proves he is a great man by showing a very fine waistcoat.* The effect on mine hostess was prodigious! She hurried me into the room behind the bar, whither my clothes had been carried, that I might finish my toilette there; and after producing a wash-hand bason, jug of water,

* Sheridan has ridiculed this absurdity in his farce of ' The Critic,' by making the supposed Yeoman of the Guard throw off his dress, and exclaim ' Am I a Beef-Eater now?' The usual wording of directions in play books, upon such occasions, is ' discovers himself;' but this is vague and puzzling for the actor, as many of the directions are. I have heard of an old play where a miser repents, in dumb show, of his sordid disposition, at the end of the fifth act; and it is set forth in a marginal note, that he ' leans against the wall, and grows generous.' I know not by what device the performer could indicate such a mental revolution to the audience, unless by giving the wall to the first comer.

&c., she unlocked a chest of drawers, and spread before me napkins in profusions. I told her not to trouble herself, as I knew where to find the jack-towel, and the pump, which set her bobbing and curtseying, and apologising, at a furious rate. 'Oh, your honour,' she said, 'wha wad ha' dreamed o' sic a thing? had I kenn'd that your honour had been your honour,' and then she went on, in a strain of toadyism equal to her previous insolence.*

"Alas! there are, in this wide world, too many likenesses of my landlady! too many mean-minded folks, both in low life and in high, who can only show their respect, or their consequence, by servility and overbearance; and who cringe to those above them, in the same ratio as they are arrogant to their inferiors in rank or fortune.

"My one pound note, with which I started on my adventure, had dwindled to eighteen-pence; but I had arranged that a small supply should accompany my clothes; so I paid an extortinate bill for very scurvy entertainment, and got into the post-chaise; the two servants seated themselves on the bar, in front of the vehicle, while the gentry who had witnessed the beginning of my metamorphosis, in the kitchen, came out to the door, to see me set off, and gave me three cheers at my departure.

"I reached Edinburgh most thoroughly cured of my fancy for the Scotch Pastoral; and, had I been desired to repeat the excursion, I should have felt

* This must have been the original, upon whom George Colman, the younger, in afterdays, founded the character of Mrs. Brulgruddery.

like the unsportsmanlike person once present at a fox-chase, who, on being afterwards asked to go a-hunting, answered 'no, thank you, I have been.'

"When the Leith race-week was over, Earle and I returned to King's College together, in a style partaking both of the aristocratic and the shabby genteel; for we started a couple of outriders, our two servants on horseback, as a dashing escort to our sorry conveyance of a hack chaise and pair.

"Now a hack post-chaise, being in most instances a clattering, whirring, jingling vehicle, whose peculiar qualities consist of inflexible springs, a narrow seat, and a perpendciular back, doors which must be slammed before they are shut, and which fly open again at the first jolt, iron door steps, doubled up inside, swinging against your leg, musty straw under your feet, and a broken glass peep-hole close behind your head, one window out of four, which won't pull up, and another that won't let down, all of them shadeless and cracked, that you may be blinded by the sun, and pelted with the showers; these being its characteristics, who, let me ask, would willingly be boxed up and jumbled about in it, over hill and dale, for hours together? paying fifteen or eighteen-pence per mile, to have his body and bones pummelled, bumped, bruised, dislocated and bedeviled! Look at such a carriage abstractedly, it is an engine of torture, worthy the invention of a Spanish Inquisitor; but take it comparatively; first explore your weary way as I did, from Aberdeen to Edinburgh, as a foot-passenger, and then get into one of these infernal machines, why, Sir, it is a

luxury! at least I found it so; and well, no doubt, was that luxury estimated by the Irish traveller, whose system was evidently built upon bifold practice, before he composed his celebrated distich of

> 'When I'm rich, I ride in chaises,
> When I'm poor, I walk, by Jasus.'

"Shortly after my return to College, I sat down to write my first play; and boy's play I made of it! trusting at the beginning of my fable entirely to chance for a middle and an end. I had no materials for a plot, further than the common place foundation of a marriage projected by parents, contrary to the secret views and wishes of the parties to be united; and which, of course, is to be obviated by the usual series of stratagems, accidents, and equivoques. Alas! what those stratagems were to be, or how the second scene was to be conducted, I had not any idea, while I was writing the first; but having finished the first, I hurried on into the second, with as little forecast about the third; and so on, from scene to scene, spinning out stage business, as it is termed, as I went along, and scribbling at hap-hazard, as humours and conceits might govern, till I came to the conclusion of act one.

"One act completed, enabled me to proceed somewhat less at random, in the two acts to come, by obliging me to consider a little about the means of continuing, and then unravelling, the perplexities I had already created; still I persevered, as to whole acts, in the same want of regular plan which had marked my progress, in respect to scenes; at Christ-

mas, however, I found that I had floundered through two thirds of a three-act piece, which I called a musical comedy, under the title of 'Two to One.'

"In this improvident way I have written all my dramas, which are not founded either on some historical incident, or on some story or anecdote, which I have met with in print; and, of those thus founded, I never made out a scheme of progressive action before I began upon the dialogue.

"The historical incidents to which I have been indebted have, of course, helped me, in some measure, to see my way in the formation of a plot; but they have not been of a nature to furnish me with materials for a whole play; no more have the fictitious stories, except one;* so that even when I have borrowed a little, I have coined a great deal; and have coined, to use a common phrase, off-hand.

"It is out of my power to ascertain in what manner all poets buckle to their task; but if Bayes's question of 'how do you do when you write?' were put to every living Dramatist, I doubt whether any two of them would answer alike; at all events, I presume to think that not one of them goes into training for the undertaking after Bayes's own original receipt; 'If,' says he, 'I am to write familiar things, I make use of stewed prunes only; but, when I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physic, and let blood.'

"Æschylus, we are told, took a directly opposite course, drinking deep before he could flash his

* Godwin's 'Things as they are; or, the Adventures of Caleb Williams.' This novel, best known by its second title, is the original of the play of the *Iron Chest*.

poetical fires, or thunder his dithyrambics; his style was in consequence so very vehement, that Aristophanes called him a mad bull, and Sophocles said of him, but he was a rival, remember, that his tragedies were produced by the wine, and not by the poet. I know not whether any modern bards may follow the bibacious Grecian's example, but certainly some of them indulge in flights which are none of the soberest; while several, on the other hand, if they be water-drinkers, have resorted to Hippocrene less than to any other fountain, for their potations.

"I have heard of an indefatigable author whose method was to write five-and-twenty acts, and then to reduce them to five, by paring down his exuberances;* of another, who so matured his plan, that he always wrote his last act first; and of a third, who was so plagued and puzzled in making *denouements*, that he was for abolishing the last acts of plays, altogether. Various, indubitably, are the modes of going to work upon a theatrical entertainment; but, if I were to start afresh, as a dramatist, *quod Dii avertant!* I would so far profit from experience as to abide by the few following resolutions—

"First, To draw up a prospectus of the story and the stage business, previously to beginning to write the play. This I believe to be the practice of most authors. My father made an outline, of the above kind, for the comedy of the *Clandestine Marriage*, under three different heads; namely, Idea of Principal Characters; Rough Draught of the General Scheme; and Loose Hints of Acts and Scenes.†

* Cumberland.

† Vide page 162, Vol. I.

" Secondly, To avoid much precision, and detail, in the prospectus; for, by filling up the outline too minutely, there is danger of fettering fancy, and checking further invention, while writing the play. When an author is contented with what he has specifically set down for himself to do, he is less likely to warm with the subject as he proceeds: it is natural for him to go plodding on, without eliciting such new matter as is sometimes happily produced from the spur of the moment.

" Thirdly, In choosing to strike out a drama from some historical fact, or ready-made tale of fiction, always to select a short and single one; by single, I mean free from complications. A scanty subject, which requires to be amplified, both stimulates the imagination, and gives it elbow-room: hence new characters are engrafted upon the original stock, new incidents grow out of the appropriated ground; and the Dramatist obtains greater credit when his own creative muse has assisted in laying out a patch taken from the Common.

" Fourthly, Which is a kind of corollary from the third resolution, as, indeed, the third is a branch from the second: never to dramatize a novel of two or three volumes; there is so much to reject for want of room, yet so much to compress which cannot be left out, that the original is mutilated, while the copy is encumbered.

" The novel-writer and dramatist arrivè at the same point by two different roads; and that mode of conducting a story which is a help to the first, is a hinderance to the latter; the first interests you,

by expanding his matter; the latter wearies you, if he do not condense it. Minuteness of detail, and a slow development of the main characters and events, by previous narration, and foregoing occurrences, heighten the effects of a Novel: a Play must plunge *in medias res;* must avoid, or at all events curtail, narratives as much as possible; must bring forward its *dramatis personæ* with little or no preparation, and keep attention alive by brevity of dialogue, and rapidity of action.

" As to the generality of entertainments which have been manufactured of late from the popular Scotch stories, they can hardly be classed among dramatic writings. These crippled Iliads in a nut-shell are the journeywork of the stage, in which scissors and paste predominate over pen and ink; consisting chiefly of huge passages cut out of the printed books, and fastened in adhesive torture together. They are calculated, however, to please the million, and to be profitable to the trade.

" I hope it will be understood that I do not mean to dogmatize, by laying down rules for others in the foregoing resolutions. They are only intended for myself, in case I should, as I trust I shall not, have any future occasion for them. Were it possible that I could, in the days of my youth, have possessed my present experience, my resolution then would have been, never to write for the stage, if by any other pursuit I can obtain an honest gentleman's livelihood.

" Perhaps this avowal may be called affectation, or ingratitude, or both, since my dramatic attempts

have been generally successful; but few avocations are, in my present opinion, less eligible than that of the Drama. It caught my fancy when I was a boy, for I began not long after nineteen. At first, the very act of scribbling gave me pleasure; and I scribbled away, ignorant of 'the art to blot,' and thoughtless of any danger in submitting my crudities to the critics: the novelty of the thing wore off, and after my amusement became my profession, I soon felt the irksomeness of every task, and contemplated probable vexation in the event of it. When you are labouring for fame, or profit, or for both, and think all the while you are at work, that instead of obtaining either, you may be d——d, it is not pleasant; nor is it agreeable to reflect, that a handful of blockheads may in half-an-hour consign first to disgrace, and then to oblivion, your toil of half-a-year; nay, that your own footman, who is one of what is called 'the town,' can, by paying a shilling, hiss and hoot at your new comedy from beginning to end; and, having broken your night's rest, your judge in the upper gallery goes to sleep in your garret.

"But these considerations apart, I verily think, that the wear and tear upon the nerves, occasioned by dramatic composition, may deduct some years from a man's life. It has been my habit, I know not why, except perhaps that the muse is more propitious after dinner, to write, chiefly, late at night; and when I have grown heated with my subject, it has so chilled my limbs that I have gone to bed as if I had been sitting up to my knees in ice.

"Some few dramatists, however, have told me

that they have always written with such ease and rapidity, that I have been astonished, or indeed, have scarcely believed them; but my wonder and incredulity have generally ceased upon a perusal of these gentlemen's hasty productions.

" After all, success may tickle an author's vanity, but failure sadly mortifies his pride; particularly in writing for the stage, where success and failure are so immediate, and so marked; and, to say the best of it, a dramatist's is a devil of a life!"

The only pieces written by George Colman the elder in 1781 and 1782 were an occasional drama, called Preludio, and a pantomime, under the title of Harlequin Teague.*

On the 29th of June, in the latter year, Lillo's tragedy of Fatal Curiosity was revived, to which Colman wrote the annexed prologue, which was spoken by John Palmer.

" Long since, beneath this humble roof, this play,
Wrought by true English genius, saw the day.
Forth from this humble roof it scarce has stray'd;
In prouder theatres 'twas never play'd.
There you have gap'd and doz'd o'er many a piece,
Patch'd up from France, or stolen from Rome or Greece,
Or made of shreds from Shakespeare's golden fleece.
There scholars, simple nature cast aside,
Have trick'd their heroes out in classic pride;
No scenes, where genuine passion runs to waste,
But all hedg'd in by shrubs of modern taste!
Each tragedy laid out, like garden grounds,
One circling gravel marks its narrow bounds.
Lillo's plantations were of forest growth—
Shakespeare's the same.—Great Nature's hand in both!
Give me a tale, the passions to controul,
' Whose lightest word may harrow up the soul!'

* He was assisted by O'Keefe, in the pantomime.

A magic potion, of charmed drugs commixt,
Where pleasure courts, and horror comes betwixt!
Such are the scenes that we this night renew,
Scenes that your fathers were well pleas'd to view.
Once we half paus'd—and while cold fears prevail,
Strive with faint strokes to soften down the tale;
But soon, attir'd in all its native woes,
The shade of Lillo to our fancy rose:
'Check thy weak hand,' it said, or seem'd to say,
'Nor of its manly vigour rob my play!
From British annals I the story drew,
And British hearts shall feel, and bear it too.
Pity shall move their souls, in spite of rules,
And terror takes no lesson from the schools.
Speak to their bosoms, to their feelings trust,
You'll find their sentence generous and just!'

The seasons were, as usual at the little theatre in the Haymarket, successful.

The following letter was palpably written previously to the publication of Colman's translation of 'Horace's Art of Poetry;' which he dedicated to the learned and celebrated brothers, Joseph and Thomas Warton.

"My Dear Sir, Winton, December 7th, 1782.

"I am really and sincerely obliged to you for giving me a sight of your Art of Poetry, and for the honour you intend doing me in inscribing it to me and my brother. I shall send it to you by a safe hand the middle of next week, and shall take the freedom of an old friend in making some queries—queries only?—about some expressions that you may alter, or not, just as you see good. At Christmas, but not till after January 6, I shall try to call on you, if in town. I was extremely mortified to find you passed through this town without calling on us. Who is the man that attacks my brothers' history so violently—virulently I

should have said? What can possibly make a man so angry on such a subject? All here desire their best compliments.

"I am, dear Sir,

Very faithfully and affectionately yours,

George Colman, Esq. Jos. WARTON.
Soho Square."

[From the same.]

"MY DEAR SIR, Winton, December 11, 1782.

"I hope and trust you will receive your poem safe, as I send it by a safe hand. I sincerely, and without compliment, think it done extremely well, and with the force and freedom of Dryden's manner. I hope you will fully explain your hypothesis."

CHAPTER V.

1783.

George Colman the Younger, solitary—Lyrical Lacquey—Sale of Furniture—Visits Montrose—Quaker Landlord—New Aberdeen—Haunted House—Ghost of a Carpenter—Revisits Edinburgh—George a Master Mason—Returns to London—Decayed Wardrobe—Horace's Art of Poetry—Colman the Elder's Translation—Malone—Dr. Vincent—Horace Walpole—Thomas and Joseph Warton—Dr. Shipley—Vernon Sadleir—Bishop Hinchliffe—Thomas Davies—Re-decoration of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket Theatres—Opening Address—The Election of Managers.

WE now resume the narrative of George Colman the Younger, at Aberdeen:

"At the beginning of the year 1783, Mr. Earle migrated from Old Aberdeen to St. Andrews, to remain there with a juvenile friend connected with his family, who had lately become a student in the University of that decayed city, and Mr. Perkins had not long before returned to England.

"I was thus left an extraneous animal, in a crowd of young scholastic Yahoos, as forlorn as a fashionable 'Last Man,' when all belonging to the *beau monde* but himself have quitted London.

"For about a week or ten days, I breakfasted, dined, and supped solitarily in my apartments; and when I walked out for exercise, as I never mixed with the under-graduates of our fraternity, we passed each other in greater silence than the monks

of La Trappe, without so much as that least cheering of all social salutations, '*Memento mori.*'

"Even Geordy, my serving man and fellow pedestrian, who might have broken the silence of my solitude now and then while attending me, was no longer in my pay. I had cashiered him for listening on the outside of my room-door, an amusement in which it seems he indulged whenever any body was conversing with me. This was imparted to me by an informer; one evening, therefore, while *tête à tête* with one of my English friends, I bolted out suddenly, and caught the curious Geordy in the very act, with his ear at the key-hole. After his instantaneous expulsion, a world of his mal-practices came to light, and I found that the knave had been feeding fat * upon me. On Geordy's disgrace I took a good-natured honest lad to succeed him, who was not calculated to become a useful domestic, since 'the gods had made him poetical.' I retained him but a short time, and we parted, I forget precisely when, how, or why. Some years afterwards, I saw him in London, whither he had travelled as a trader I believe, to the Mart of Genius. He published some sonnets and similar prettinesses, with his name to them, in the Newspapers and other fugitive prints, but not proving a second Burns, he has remained in obscurity.

"Retracing my way across the Tweed, or ceasing to be, nominally at least, a student in Old Aberdeen, were measures which I durst not adopt with-

* "I will feed fat the ancient grudge I owe him."
Merchant of Venice.

out the parental permission; but heartily sick of moping alone, I determined on a change of scene; a change which, considering that I was ordered down to live in a College, under the control of a tutor, was effected by means very inconsistent with filial obedience or academic subordination.

" My first object was to march out of my old melancholy quarters: my second, never to march back again. I therefore stripped the walls, and employed an auctioneer to sell off my furniture, of which the reader has already been presented with a catalogue.

" With all the precious drops I could distil from my chairs and tables: that is, with eight pounds, nineteen shillings, and sixpence, a sum rather of the smallest, for all the household effects of a gentleman giving up his establishment, I started for Montrose.

" Little or no ceremony was requisite in apprizing Rory Macleod of my movements; he was used to my excursions, and did not trouble himself or me about their duration; he was sure, at all events, that I should turn up again on quarter-day, or indeed some time before it. As to my becoming so complete a non-resident at the University, I attended no lectures, I observed no rules, if there were any to enforce; my private tutor was little more than my paymaster, and his pupil merely a lodger in a College; therefore, whether I sojourned in one Scotch town or another, *Thebis an Argis*, provided the place were cheap, was of small importance to honest Rory.

" Lucretius gives us four lines to the following purport:

How sweet it is, when snug on shore, to view
A heaving vessel's tempest-driven crew,
Grim Death around them glaring!
Not that 'tis sweet to see poor fellows drown'd,
But vastly pleasant to be safe and sound,
While others are despairing.*

"The poet seems to derive this sentiment from principles of mere self-love, but he might, had he not been an atheistical Epicurean, have traced it to the better source of gratitude to Providence, for sparing us from calamities which are inflicted upon men less fortunate than ourselves. Let the feeling arise as it may, the sensation produced by reviewing scenes of our own discomforts, when those discomforts no longer exist, is in some degree allied to it, though it does not render us suspected of wanting compassion for our neighbours; and this sensation I experienced while travelling in a carriage over the very same ground which I had footed a few months before, in almost as much misery as Hassan crossing the desert.†

"Arrived once more at Montrose, I procured a first floor, comfortably furnished, in the dwelling-house of a small, and strange to say, lively family of Quakers. It stood on the south-east edge of the town, which is on the edge of the Links, which again, are on the edge of the German Ocean; so that, altogether, I edged myself into very good quarters.

* Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terrâ magnum alterius spectare laborem;
Non quia vexari quemquam est jucunda voluptas,
Sed, quibus ipse malis careas, quia cernere suave est.
Lib. sec.

† See Collins's Oriental Eclogues.

" Friend Aminadab, my landlord, was a remarkably fat specimen of the Faithful—the Society of Jumpers would never have suited him; but his wife was a spare little woman, who certainly did not look like his better half, and might much more promptly be called 'bone of his bone' than 'flesh of his flesh.' They appeared to have numbered nearly three score years apiece; and had retired from trade upon a competence which made them happy; or if it did not, their countenances belied them; for the husband's ample physiognomy beamed with pleasantness like a harvest moon at the full, while calm content sat smiling on the matronly features of his spouse.

" Children in the humbler ranks of life soon quit their parents, for they must go forth to earn their bread. Whatever, therefore, might have been the brood of this ancient pair of turtles, their nestlings were reared, and had flown, long ago; but the old man and woman employed twa bonnie lasses of their own sect, as maid-servants; who kept the apartments accurately clean; and, when their work was done, enlivened the house, at least I thought so, at the distance of the first floor from the kitchen, by singing Scotch songs and duets to the twirl of their spinning-wheels.

" In short, the inhabitants of the dwelling were as cheerful as the view from their windows. Of course, they adhered to *Thee* and *Thou*, and they were all *brown*, that is in respect to their outward garments. Aminadab wore his broad brimmed beaver, his dame looked very snug in her close cap, and the maids

looked very pretty in theirs; but their manners had not the buckram of Quakerism; there was no ostentation of formality or sedateness; and above all, they were vastly obliging and attentive to the first-floor lodger.

"I had brought nothing with me from the library of King's College, except a Homer and a Lexicon, that I might still rub on with my Greek; but among the articles in my sitting-room, I found, greatly to my surprise, much the same collection of English volumes, both as to quality and quantity, as was placed in the Inn at Laurence Kirk. The volumes, too, were displayed in exactly the same kind of repository, a glazed mahogany case, dapperly perched upon the top of a bureau.

"With this windfall of books for light reading, Homer for a study, my own scribbling for a hobby-horse, a few acquaintances which I made among respectable inhabitants of the town, and the officers quartered there, I had wherewithal either to improve time or to waste it, in Montrose.

"Here then, I remained stationary for three months, bating one trip to Rory Macleod, in March, to receive my quarterage, and hear his wonted dissertation upon economy. Here I wrote the last act of 'Two to One,' and forwarded the play to my father, who immediately accepted it for representation at his theatre, but by some accident it was not performed until the season afterwards, when I had returned to town, and witnessed its first representation; here, also, I did not fail to revisit the fisherman's widow, who had been so hospitable to me,

and had screened me from persons exercising the only Freedom of the Press which is unpopular; for instead of maintaining English liberty, it takes away that birthright of the subject.

" The abruptness of my unexpected return, and in a new character, beneath the widow's humble roof, almost overpowered her with surprise. She recognised my features immediately, but not my person. She would hardly credit that the English gentleman, then before her, could be the way-faring soldier of a highland regiment, for whom she had procured a passage in the collier? Nor did any thing ever ruffle the smooth current of our intercourse, but her constant refusal of money, as a token of the gratitude I owed her. We then indeed would bicker, but it was a friendly warfare, and ended, after many skirmishes, in a compromise, by her acceptance of some household linen, both for bed and board, which I knew would be of use to her.

" Three months had passed, when it came into my head, I know not how, unless Homer's lofty song of Troy besieged, and heroes slaughtered, had brought it there, to obtain a general knowledge of ancient history; this required, besides the regular perusal of certain historians, a variety of references to other authors, to maps, &c. My immediate residence afforded no facilities for such a research, King's College did. I was still indulged with leave to borrow books from its library, though not allowed to transport my loans in the quantities I wanted, to a distance of about thirty-eight miles; and as the mountain could not come to Mahomet, not that I

presume to compare myself with that illustrious conjurer, Mahomet determined to go to the mountain. I bade adieu, therefore, to my lively Quakers, went back, not to my old rooms, for I had dismantled their walls, but to their vicinity; and, at the end of May, settled myself in New Aberdeen, where I had several acquaintances.

"Verily, friend Aminadab's habitation was a pleasant place, and it spoiled me for dwelling in the heart of cities; wherefore, on quitting his apartments, to take up my abode as above mentioned, I was desirous of obtaining lodgings as similar, in point of situation, to those I had just relinquished, as possible. I could meet with nothing of this sort exactly answerable to my wish. The nearest to the mark was a cottage on the skirts of the New Town, where rooms to let had been a great while unoccupied, and were likely to remain so, a great while longer; and for an appalling reason, the house was haunted! But this drawback upon domestic quiet was counterbalanced by a material advantage, the apparition, there was but one, had considerably lowered the rent; and what is one solitary spectre, in a neatly furnished tenement, when the best rooms in it are to be had dog-cheap? I consulted Rory Macleod on the subject, who advised me to strike a bargain for the apartments, without delay, which I did accordingly. I had just left a family of Quakers, and it was indifferent to me whether people with whom I resided were moved by the spirit, or disturbed by a ghost.

"As every ghost has its peculiar and distinct

mysteries, it may be better to explain matters a little minutely.

"The house, in which I lodged, appertained to one of those marine carriers, calling themselves captains, whose business it is to keep a vessel in the alternate states of plethora and depletion; and he was perpetually lading and unlading his floating stage-waggon, for the transportation of all sorts of goods at various ports: but his chief voyages were, I believe, to Russia.

"On the homeward-bound passage from St. Petersburgh, his ship's carpenter got drunk one night, tumbled into the sea, and was drowned; and as a carpenter does not possess the same buoyancy as the substances on which he goes to work, the odds were that when he had reached the bottom of the Baltic, he would not come up again, and swim to Scotland: but, in this instance, the knowing ones were taken in, for, when the captain landed at New Aberdeen, his family ran open-mouthed to him on the Quay, and astounded him with the news that the carpenter had got home a considerable time before him; that he danced on the floor of the empty garret, in the dead of the night, with his bag of tools at his back, and hammered at short intervals, from twelve o'clock till dawn. Those who asserted this terrifying fact, must doubtless have peeped at him through the key-hole; and they moreover affirmed, after a comparison of dates, that the first performance of his pas seul was on the very night he was drowned. It cannot, indeed, be said, as of Hamlet's father, that the sepulchre had 'given him up,' for he

had never been buried; but by all the laws of legends, and preternaturals, he was as good, downright, and orthodox, a ship's carpenter's ghost as ever revisited the glimpses of the moon; had he happened to fall into the Red Sea, instead of the Baltic, it must infallibly have laid him.

"In respect to the captain's abode, its locality, and its inhabitants, the house itself was not very unlike some of those jemmy boxes, fitted up as villas by minor tradesmen, in the environs of London, those dear little Honeysuckle halls, and Rosebud lodges. It had a garden before it of a few feet square, fenced with trellis work; inside were two parlours on the ground-floor, each of these had a smaller room behind them, further back, a bed-room for one of the family, close to the kitchen, pantry and scullery; and over all these, nothing but garrets. Be it remembered, too, pardon me, my good reader, I must be precise in my description, for it has a bearing upon the ghost: be it remembered, then, that the house was completely insulated, standing in front of a road, over which, being only a by-lane to the links, a carriage or even a horseman, or pedestrian, very seldom passed. On one side, and a furlong off, were the north-eastern extremities of New Aberdeen; on the other, an open field or two, adjoining the aforesaid links; at the back, but at a respectful distance, was a cow-house.

"The inhabitants were, the captain, when returned from a voyage; his niece, tall and straight; a male relation, short and hump-backed; and a maid-servant. The niece acted as housekeeper, but the

crooked kinsman, who followed some trade in the town, was never at home, Sundays excepted, till dusk. I occupied one of the parlours, and the room behind it: sitting in the first, and sleeping in the latter; the counterpart of these rooms the captain reserved for himself; the niece slept near the kitchen; the maid servant in one of the front garrets, Humpy in another, and the empty garret, where the ghost hammered and danced, was exactly over my bedchamber.

"On the first night of entering the lodgings, as my habits were tolerably early, I went to bed half an hour before, 'the witching time of night, when churchyards yawn.' I was between sleeping and waking, and the melancholy eight-day clock in the captain's parlour was striking twelve, when, hark! the punctual ghost startled me by so decided and solemn a thump, on the garret floor, that he seemed to say, 'You are a new lodger, and I must give you a hearty welcome.' The sound resembled that of a sledge hammer striking upon an anvil, but as if both hammer and anvil were muffled: dull, dismal, and heavy: so heavy indeed, that it made the poker and tongs rattle in the fire-place. Soon after the first blow came a second, and another, and another, then one not so loud, then several in quick succession: by and by, the shuffling of feet, or the dancing; and so on, more or less, till daybreak; in short, it kept me all night awake, quoting from one of old Dibdin's songs, 'the devil take the carpenter!'

"Having been told that I was to expect some-

thing of this kind, and the lodging being cheap in consequence, I had, perhaps, no great right to complain; the nuisance, however, had been palliated, by the niece who let the apartments; and when, instead of the gentle raps and taps, as she described them, there came such a confounded thunderstorm of thumps, directly over my head, I could not help thinking that, in comparison with the rent, the row was too great, by at least half a crown a week.

"Night after night, the disturbance continued, though with different degrees of violence: but the proverb of familiarity breeding contempt applies as well to the dead as to the quick: whence it happens, that having a ghost for a fellow-lodger is much the same as living next door to a trunk-maker, he annoys you terribly at first, but, after a little time, you take no notice of him: still there was quite enough to excite curiosity, and nobody likes to give up a riddle.

"I suspected a hoax, and that the *bossu*,* whom I have mentioned as a male relation, was the hoaxer; but this was a mistake, for poor little crook-back turned out to be a rank coward; and so far from shamming a ghost, would have fled like an arrow, though looking like the bow, to avoid one. One night, for instance, while the carpenter was more busy than usual, I stole softly up stairs to the empty garret, and kicked open the door, a process easily effected, as the wood-work was slight and the lock bad: at the moment after the bounce which the forcing of this barrier occasioned, my ears were

* Hunch-back.

assailed by a deep groan! All was silent when I got into the room, all was silent till I came out; and the candle in my hand would have enabled me to see anybody, if there had been anybody there to be seen; but there was neither flesh, blood, nor spirit, neither hoaxer, nor carpenter, nor carpenter's tools, nor his shadow; there was my own shadow against the naked walls, and nothing else: nothing but an unfurnished garret, and the window screwed down in the inside.

"Previously to returning down stairs, I gave three very hard slaps, with my open hand, against the chamber door adjoining to that which was haunted, when the agonized Humpy, who lay there, sent forth a hideous shriek, as if all the screech-owls in Der Freischütz had been in his stomach. It convinced me that he was no practical joker, and that he had been listening in his bed to the extra noises of that fearful and particular night,

'Distilled almost to jelly with his fear.'

"It then also occurred to me, that the deep groan above mentioned must have come from the same quarter. Next morning, little Æsop fabled greatly, about all the clatter he had heard; exaggerating much, and inventing more; and, on the succeeding night, the carpenter laid it on thicker, to express his anger at the liberty I had taken with his workshop.

"Thoroughly convinced, at last, that neither Humpy nor any of the family were playing tricks, I nevertheless held it to be highly improbable, if not impossible, from the situation of the captain's house, which I have endeavoured to describe accurately,

that noises could be conveyed into it by external accident, or design; at least, such noises as hammering and dancing, lasting all night, and every night, and all concentrated in the back garret.

"The road in front, be pleased to recollect, and the grounds behind it, were unfrequented and uninhabited; so was the tract, on one side; on the other side, the nearest dwellings on the skirts of the New Town were too remote to be brought into question. The cow-house in the rear, though even that was detached and many yards apart, seemed to be the only spot from which an auricular illusion was at all likely to proceed; that place, therefore, was to be searched; but I was as doubtful of discovering anything there, to advance the theory of sounds, as I was certain that the term *acoustics*, whatever mere English readers may think, is not derived from a *cow-house*.

"Well, this repository for cattle was explored, once, twice, and thrice; at times too when the carpenter was in high force, and raging his utmost; but no cattle, or cattle-keepers were to be found there: no cow, bull, ox, nor ass, nor any animal, brute or human. Thus then, the affair remained *in statu quo*, and the hammering and dancing went on involved in mystery, and so it may be going on at this very day, provided the house be standing, and the ghost indefatigable.

"That in these our times, strange effects arise only from natural causes; that amphibious carpenters, drowned past all help from the Humane Society, never do posthumous jobs in a garret: that

a spectre now neglects his nocturnal duty rather more, if possible, than a watchman, are points upon which I have fully made up my mind; but the foregoing wonder of wonders is one of those gordian knots which tighten the tethers of superstition, and which reason and research have not been able to untie.

Ancient history and the ghost were the two chief objects of my inquiry during the summer of 1783; and the few deciduous leaves had fallen which an Aberdeen autumn has to drop, when I received a most welcome letter from my father to recall me from my banishment. My instructions were, not to return to London instantly, but to be in Soho Square at the approaching Christmas; I determined, therefore, as it was then the beginning of November, to go to Edinburgh towards the end of the month, to stay there about three weeks, and then to proceed on my journey home.

"Since Aberdeen, considering both towns as one, had always appeared to me a seat of exile, and a region of dulness, I did not anticipate the regret I experienced on the morning of my departure from it; but such is the force of habit, and the caprice of human nature, that after having lived for a length of time in the place where I had been grumbling, day after day, at every thing and every body, I could not help feeling a momentary pensiveness on quitting the old spot, and quitting it, in all probability, for ever. Shaking hands with honest Rory Macleod, who, though too little of a disciplinarian, and too much of an economist, meant well, and had a truly

kind heart, was a painful leave-taking: the very streets, as I drove off in a post-chaise, and looked at the buildings for the last time, inspired me with an interest which they had never excited before; and those individual Aberdeenites, with whom I had formed an acquaintance, floated in my mind, with all their best qualities on the surface.

"On summing up time lost and improved during both my actual and nominal residence in Aberdeen, I flattered myself that I had wasted less than might have been expected from one so flighty and indolent as myself.

"While a member of King's College, I had voluntarily acquired a much larger portion of classical knowledge in two years, and 'a wee bit,' as the Scotch say, than I had compulsively been taught in more than five times two at Marylebone, Westminster, and Oxford. My reading, therefore, was so much time improved: as to my writing, I might be puzzled to say on which side of the account it should be placed, if it had not eventually been the foundation of a trade for me, though I might have found a much better than that of a dramatist, which I have often exercised to advantage in point of mere money; and if that had failed, I had gained something else, for by privilege of my freedom of the city of New Aberdeen, I may return there, and set up a shop whenever I please. A further gain too, which I had forgot, but the word freedom has put me in mind of it, was my initiation into the craft of Free-Masonry, that grand arcanum which is confided to thousands all over the world, and has

thereby become, as Lingo would call it, ' a secret *pro bono publico.*'

" It appears that I valued the honours of the New Town Lodge above those of the Old Town University; for I was proud of being raised to the rank of a Master Mason, but when King's College complimented me with the offer of a Master of Arts' degree, I declined it.

" Things fall out, and things fall down; and, among other chances and mischances, there happened to be a heavy fall of snow a few days before I should have gone to London; in consequence of which, as a Scotch fall of snow, like a Scotch man, is remarkable for perseverance, my stay at Edinburgh was protracted till late in January.

" As the remittance for my travelling expenses sent to me from the Haymarket Treasurer was more ample than it might have been if coming directly from the Manager himself, I could afford to choose my own mode of conveyance; I continued my route therefore from Newcastle to London in post-chaises, delighted to revisit my native land, and doubly enjoying its polished prospects in contrast with the rugged scenery from which I had just been emancipated; thinking too, with all due deference to the splendid products of the quarry, that the sight of a comfortable English brick village was quite refreshing, after many of the melancholy stone-built towns in Scotland.

" My father welcomed me to Soho Square in the full flow of his kindness, but it ebbed a little on the morning after my arrival, when the housekeeper

expounded to him the lamentable contents of Mr. George Colman's small travelling trunk, which threatened an immediate call upon the parental purse, to furnish raiment for the prodigal returned. The careful dame had set down upon a small scrap of paper, all that the trunk contained, but the list was almost as meagre as Prince Harry's inventory* of Poins's wardrobe; each article enumerated had seen so much service, that there was no saying of them, according to the consoling apophthegm, 'when things are at the worst, they will mend:' yet so few were they in number, they seemed to corroborate the opinion of Goldsmith's Hermit, that

'Man wants but little here below.'

"The fact is, foreseeing the term of my banishment must soon expire, and having, spite of Rory Macleod's economical advice, quite calls enough upon my quarterly allowance, without the charges for apparel, I had latterly suffered both my linen and woollen to diminish and decay, trusting to what actually happened, a complete fit-out on my return to London, at my father's cost.

"When fully and fashionably equipped, I had, during this winter, only to do what many well dressed young gentlemen, and not a few old ones did in that day and do in the present, *videlicet*,

* 'What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name, or to know thy face to-morrow, or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast; *viz.* these, and those that were the peach-coloured ones; or to bear the inventory of thy shirts, as one for superfluity, and one other for use.'

Shakspeare's Henry IV.

nothing at all, unless the occupations of a lounging man of pleasure in London, may be called something. I devoted indeed some part of every morning to reading, for which my father's library afforded me excellent opportunities."

In March 1783, Mr. Colman gave the public a new translation of, and Commentary on, Horace's Art of Poetry, in which he produced a new system to explain this very difficult poem. In opposition to Doctor Hurd, he supposed " that one of the sons of Piso, undoubtedly the elder, had either written or meditated a poetical work, most probably a tragedy, and that he had, with the knowledge of the family, communicated his piece or intention to Horace. But Horace, either disapproving of the work, or doubting of the poetical faculties of the elder Piso, or both, wished to dissuade him from all thought of publication. With this view he formed the design of writing this epistle, addressing it with a courtliness and delicacy perfectly agreeable to his acknowledged character, indifferently to the whole family, the father and his two sons. *Epistola ad Pisones de Arte Poeticâ.*"

This hypothesis is supported with much learning, ingenuity, and modesty; and if not fully established, is at least as well entitled to applause as that adopted by the Bishop of Worcester.

On the publication of this work, the Bishop thus wrote to Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury. " Give my compliments to Colman, and thank him for the handsome manner in which he has treated me; and tell him that I think he is right."

The following letters from some of the eminent literary characters of the day, will attest the estimation in which Colman's translation was held on its appearance. The following is from Edmund Malone, the commentator on Shakspeare:

"Mr. Malone presents his compliments to Mr. Colman, and returns him many thanks for his most obliging present; and requests his acceptance of an unpublished pamphlet on the inexhaustible subject of Shakspeare, in which, by a singular coincidence, Mr. Malone finds he has had the good fortune to stumble on a motto, that has likewise attracted the notice of Mr. Colman.

"Thursday, May 6, 1783."

From Dr. William Vincent, whose writings are familiar to the learned, he received the subjoined letter. Doctor Vincent was Under Master of Westminster School, then Head Master, then Dean of Westminster.

George Colman (the younger) speaks of him feelingly; "He had clearness of head, and great strength of arm; I have smarted sundry times under the influence of the latter."

"Dean's Yard, May 9, 1783.

"DEAR SIR,

"I return you my best acknowledgments for the present of your translation, and if it will be any satisfaction to you to hear that you have gained a suffrage to your opinion, I do assure you, you have one in me. The original, though a study of no small labour, has ever been, in parts obscure to me; in those parts, I mean, which you particularly com-

plain of, but the point you more especially wish to elucidate, is, as far my judgment goes, made perfectly clear.

" There is a particular which strikes me as adding much to the probability of your conjecture of the elder Piso's attempting a tragedy, which is, that according to the fashion of the age, every man of education attempted to write in verse, and most of them for the stage. Julius Cæsar produced an Œdipus; Sueton. cap. 56. in Julio; and Augustus would have done as much, if he could. Sueton. Octav. 85. If this observation should please you, I imagine instances enough might be collected to satisfy a Scaliger, or an Heinsius. Believe me,

Yours very faithfully, W. VINCENT."

Horace Walpole thus addressed Colman :—

" Strawberry Hill, May 10, 1783.

" DEAR SIR,

" For so you must allow me to call you, after your being so kind as to send me so valuable and agreeable a present as your translation of Horace. I wish compliment had left any terms uninvaded, of which sincerity could make use without suspicion. Those would be precisely what I would employ in commending your poem; and if they proved too simple to content my gratitude, I would be satisfied with an offering to truth, and wait for a nobler opportunity of sacrificing to the warmer virtue.

" If I have not lost my memory, your translation is the best I have ever seen of that difficult epistle. Your expression is easy and natural, and when requisite, poetic; in short, it has a prime merit, it has the air of an original.

" Your hypothesis, in your Commentary is very ingenious. I do not know whether it is true, which now cannot be known; but if the scope of the epistle was, as you suppose, to hint in a delicate and friendly manner to the elder of Piso's sons, that he had written a bad tragedy, Horace had

certainly executed his plan with great address; and, I think, nobody will be able to show that any thing in the poem clashes with your idea. Nay, if he went farther, and meaned to disguise his object, by giving his epistle the air of general rules on poetry and tragedy, he achieved both purposes, and while the youth his friend, was at once corrected, and put to no shame, all other readers were kept in the dark, except you, and diverted to different scents.

" Excuse my commenting your comment, but I had no other way of proving that I really approve both the version and criticism, than by stating the grounds of my applause. If you have wrested the sense of the original to favour your own hypothesis, I have not been able to discover your art, for I do not perceive where it has been employed. If you have given Horace more meaning than he was entitled to, you have conferred a favour on him, for you have made his whole epistle consistent, a beauty all the spectacles of all his commentators could not find out; but indeed they proceed on the profound laws of criticism, you by the laws of common sense, which marching on a plain natural path is very apt to arrive sooner at the goal, than they who travel on the Appian way, which was a very costly and durable work, but is very uneasy, and at present, does not lead to a quarter of the places, to which it was originally directed. I am, Sir, with great regard,

Your much obliged, and not for the first time,
and most obedient humble Servant,
Hor. Walpole."

From Dr. Thomas Warton he received the following letter:

" Trinity College, Oxon. May 11, 1783.

" Dear Colman,

" I am exceedingly obliged to you, for your very kind present. I think your theory is most ingeniously and

rationally supported, and that many obscure, and doubtful passages, are cleared up, and placed in a new point of view. I much like the simple elegance and vigour of your translation.

I am, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

T. WARTON."

From Dr. Joseph Warton.

" MY DEAR SIR, Winton, May 12, 1783.

" I thank you very heartily for your epistle to the Pisos, and for the kind address with which you have honoured me. *Ornâsti me.* There would be as much affectation, as insensibility, if I denied that it did not give me much pleasure. I cannot help believing, but that your work will become a popular book. Your translation is not only exact, but surely most elegant and clear; and I like the notes much. One I must point out, that on the disadvantages of the chorus, p. 29, though I used to be of a different opinion; but I think what you say unanswerable; particularly where you observe, what has not been observed before, ' that if the chorus be revised, all the other part of the ancient tragedy must be revised along with it.' I see you have paid the Bishop [Hurd] many handsome compliments, yet I still think many parts of his commentary are tortured and far-sought. When I come to town, I shall not fail giving myself the pleasure of visiting you, and I hope you will not forget us, but pass some days with us in the autumn.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obliged,

Friend and Servant,

J. WARTON."

The Bishop of St. Asaph,* thus expressed his acknowledgments:

"DEAR SIR, Bolton Street, May 15, 1783.

"I return you my best thanks for your most obliging present, after giving myself a little time to estimate the value of it. Indeed your translation appears to me to be close, correct, and elegant; abounding in very happy turns, and written in that familiar stile which it is so difficult to preserve, without running into those flat prosaic verses which are to be found in your quotations from our celebrated authors; not excepting even the essay on criticism. That easy epistolary stile was the last attainment of Pope himself.

"I have often thought that we wanted some anecdotes of the Piso family, to explain the art and intent of the epistle addressed to them. Bishop Hurd's hypothesis is not true, because it evidently leads him into forced constructions, and endless refinement, without much taste; which I take to be in some degree the general character of his lordship's writings, as well as of his exemplar Warburton's. Whether your conjectures are strictly truth, I cannot say; but they look so very like it, that they will answer my purpose, almost as well. They help me to find a natural meaning and a propriety of address in some passages which I hardly knew what to make of before. It would be ingratitude to detain you longer with these grave and trifling reflections, in return for the pleasure and amusement, you have given me.

I am, Dear Sir, with very sincere respect,
Your obliged and obedient,
humble servant,
J. ST. ASAPH."

* Doctor Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, opposed Government during the whole of the American War. On a published speech of this prelate, "intended to have been spoken" in the House of Lords, it has been observed that, "amongst all the productions,

And from S. W. Vernon Sadleir, he received the following:

"DEAR SIR, Southampton, May 15, 1783.

"Having some friends on a visit, who ingross my time, it has been impossible for me to read your translation of Horace's Ars Poetica, with the attention due to all your productions. I have, however, seen enough to promise myself great pleasure, in this very pleasing mark of your remembrance, and politeness, especially, in the judicious notes and observations.

"I love you for your friendly dedication to the Wartons, and I admire that liberal spirit with which you could prefer those excellent men, to so many of higher rank in life who would have been proud of the compliment. I think you have finely gilded the pill for the Bishop, for a pill it is, notwithstanding all the delicacy of expression. I hope you will gather many converts to your opinion, on this celebrated epistle.

Believe me, dear Sir,
Your much obliged
and faithful Servant,
S. W. VERNON SADLEIR."

Not one of the least commendations which Colman received on his translation of the Art of Poetry was that of Dr. Hinchliffe, then Bishop of Peterborough. He was school-fellow with Colman at Westminster, where he rose by his merit, to be Head Master. Cumberland in his Memoirs,* says,

antient or modern, it would be difficult to find an instance of more consummate elegance." He possessed talents for poetry. His sermons, charges, and parliamentary speeches, were printed in two volumes, in the year 1792.

* Vol. I., p. 67.

"Hinchliffe might well be called the child of fortune, for he was born in penury and obscurity, and was lifted into opulence and high station, not by the elasticity of his own genius, but by that lucky combination of opportunities, which merit has no share in making, and modesty no aptitude to seize. At Trinity College, I knew him as an under-graduate below my standing; in the revolution of a few years, I saw him in the station, aforetime filled by my grandfather as Master of the College, and holding with it, the Bishopric of Peterborough: thus doubly dignified with those preferments, which have separately rewarded the learned labours of Cumberland and Bentley."

Bishop Hinchliffe's letter was no doubt highly gratifying to Colman, from their connection in early life.

"My Dear Sir, Conduit Street, June 5, 1783.

"Had I thanked you for the favour of the translation you sent me, before I had read it, I should not have known how much I am obliged to you; I have now run over the whole, and am persuaded you have given a key to the mystery. Your notes contain a great treasure of critical knowledge of the ancient drama, and I have the pleasure to assure you, that the work is looked upon in a most favourable light by far better judges of its merit, than

Your very faithful friend,
and humble Servant,
John Peterborough."

From Thomas Davies, the bookseller, author of Dramatic Miscellanies, Life of Garrick, &c., he received the following note.

" Sir, Russell Street, June 21, 1783.

" I have read over your translation of Horace's Art of Poetry with pleasure. I borrowed a copy from Mr. Cadell, and could wish you would let me call it my own.

" Your notes are learned with liberality, and such as I expected from one of our best critics. You think and judge for yourself; at the same time you pay a just tribute of respect to a great and venerable character.*

" Dr. Johnson who loves you, and always speaks of you with affection, has been greatly indisposed. He is much recovered, and I hope out of danger; a kind inquiry after his health would please him.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

Thomas Davies."

The Haymarket theatre this year exhibited a scene of alteration and improvement, that had been planned with great taste and judgment. In the summer of 1775, Garrick, as chief proprietor of Drury Lane, had employed the Messieurs Adams to renovate that theatre. In a letter to Colman, on its completion, Garrick told him, with exultation, that ' the theatre was noble.' The Messrs. Adams contrived to give the interior of an old gloomy theatre, a new, a gayer, and even a gaudy appearance; but when the first feelings of surprise were passed, men began to reflect a little on the propriety of style adopted in the alteration, and it was generally argued, that though the whole was creditable to the skill and taste of the architects, the decorations were but ill adapted, since the audience part of a playhouse should by no means

* Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester.

divert the eye of the spectator from the scenic effect on the stage, and distract it by an assemblage of unnatural objects, displayed in all the glare of no-meaning painting.

Mr. Harris, urged more by desire of change, than from any real necessity, soon after decorated the interior of Covent Garden theatre; but there a more correct taste was consulted to assist the alterations, and, although the convenience and satisfaction of the audience were principally intended, the theatre was rendered more ornamental, without sacrificing to decoration what should ever be at least the secondary object in any playhouse, the preserving throughout the building a theatrical appearance.

With these examples before him, Colman had a difficult task to call forth the public approbation to his proposed alteration of the Haymarket theatre, but from concurrent testimonies of the day it appears he eminently succeeded. The style was thoroughly dissimilar to those employed in the two winter Theatres. It was lightly elegant, and not too extravagantly gay; or, to speak in other words and in more familiar phrase, it appeared to be well dressed, without looking like a *petit maître*.

"The season commenced May 31st. When the curtain drew up, Mr. Palmer came forward and addressed the audience in a Prologue written by Colman, which, in some of its allusions is singularly happy.

> Of real novelty, we're told there's none;
> We know there's nothing new beneath the sun;

Yet still untir'd, a phantom we pursue;
Still expectation gapes for something new!
To whet your appetite, and pique your taste,
Each bard serves some old dish in new puff paste;
Crams with hard crusts the literary glutton,
And, like Lord Petre, swears they 're beef and mutton.
Old magazines too, each manager plunders,
Like quacks and mountebanks, cries Wonders! Wonders!
Detection scorns; risks contradictions flat;
Boasts a black swan! and gives us—a black cat!
Two magpies thus, all winter charm the ear;
The self-same note our cuckoo dwells on here!
For we, like them, our penny trumpets sound,
And novelty 's the word, the whole year round.
What tho' our house be threescore years of age,
Let us new vamp the box, new lay the stage,
Long paragraphs shall paint, with proud parade,
The gilded front, and airy balustrade;
While on each post the flaming bill displays
Our old new Theatre, and new old plays.
The hag of fashion thus, all paint and flounces,
Fills up her wrinkles, and her age renounces.
Stage answers stage: from other boards, as here,
Have sense and nonsense claim'd by turns your ear.
Here late his jest, Sir Jeffrey Dunstan broke;
Yet here, too, Lillo's muse sublimely spoke:
Here Fielding, foremost of the hum'rous train,
In comic mask indulg'd his laughing vein!
Here frolic Foote, your favour well could beg,
Propp'd by his genuine wit, and only leg;
Their humble follower feels his merit less,
Yet feels, and proudly boasts as much success.
Small though his talents, smaller than his size,
Beneath your smiles his little Lares rise:
And oh! as Jove once grac'd Philemon's thatch,
Oft of our cottage may you lift the latch!
Oft may we greet you, full of hope and fear,
With hearty welcome, tho' but homely cheer!
May our old roof its old success maintain,
Nor know the novelty of your disdain!

Colman produced this season a piece called 'The

Election of Managers,' upon which his son makes the following remarks:

"Parliament was dissolved early in the spring of 1784, when of course the whole country was agitated by a General Election; and from the first of April, a fit day to begin fooling the electors, till May was far advanced, the contest between Lord Hood, Mr. Fox, and Sir Cecil Wray, kept the city of Westminster in constant confusion. My father, who busied himself no further in national politics than to apply them profitably, when he could, to the politics of his playhouse, opened his Theatre this year, with a prelude of his own writing, called The Election of the Managers; of which the *Biographia Dramatica* speaks as follows:

"This piece was produced at the time of [immediately after] a general election; and obtained applause more by temporary allusions to the then election for Westminster, than by any merit in itself. It was at first refused a licence; but some exceptionable passages having been omitted, it passed the Lord Chamberlain. The character of the well-known Sam House * was introduced and well personated by Mr. Edwin.

"That the piece written in haste for the occasion, was beneath the talents of the author of The Jealous Wife, cannot be denied; it must also also be admitted that its personalities, though sportive and

* A noted Publican of Wardour Street, and an enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Fox's interests at the election. His dress (or rather undress) was very remarkable; to which Edwin closely adhered, in his personation of him.

without malice, were quite enough to pose an official examiner of plays, in respect to the propriety of its representation; and personal allusions, if admitted upon the stage, are not likely, without pungent wit or humour, to be very successful. A couple of female characters were introduced among the dramatis personæ of this prelude, evidently meant for portraits of two ladies in high life, who had made themselves conspicuous at the Westminster Election, as partisans in opposite interests; the first, a beautiful duchess,* universally admired and respected; the second, an untitled lady, at that time, but afterwards a countess, in consequence of her husband having succeeded to an earldom. These were personated by Miss Farren and Mrs. Webb, not perhaps only because they were popular actresses, but also from their figures bearing some resemblance to the originals, at whom they were dressed, though not so pointedly as Edwin at Sam House. The prelude was well received, and went on smoothly for several nights, when an unexpected storm arose. Bob Monckton, a buck, (a fat one too) of that era, son to General Monckton of Quebec memory, whose figure stands prominent in West's picture of the death of General Wolfe, came night after night into a stage-box, to hiss, hoot, and cry 'Off! Off!' till he was as hoarse as a raven. This idle young gentleman, it was thought, hooted and croaked from no motive but mere wantonness; however, as one foe, like one fool, makes many, he

* The Duchess of Devonshire.

excited a formidable opposition to the piece; it was thus checked in its career, and soon laid aside.

" No matter now, whether this trifle (for it was a trifle at best) were good, bad, or indifferent; but who should have been the persons to condemn it, is a separate question; and it is surprising to find, in the various periods of our stage history, a host of dramatists persevering in their vocation, undeterred and undisgusted by a herd of Bob Moncktons. I am not discussing here the qualifications of theatrical audiences in general; I only mean to infer that in so large a body there are, and naturally must be, many very unfavourable specimens of that hydra which has obtained, from those whose bread depends upon it, the adulatory title of ' the candid and discerning public;' and that the turbulence of spiteful, or frolicsome, or foolish fellows, has too often caused the failure of dramas which have deserved a better fate."

CHAPTER VI.

1784.

Two to One—Introductory Prologue—The Author's feelings—Frank North—Haymarket Novelties—Shield, the Composer—Dr. Arnold—Visit to France—British Interpreter—Vestris—Beaumarchaise—The Marriage of Figaro—Foreign Acting—Parisian Costume—Regiment de Blaisois—Return to England—Chambers in the Temple—Colman the Younger married at Gretna Green—Dr. Johnson's Funeral—Turk and no Turk—I'll tell you what—Severe Illness of Colman the Elder, at Margate—Dr. Harvey—Secret Despondency—Silver, the Apothecary—Return to London—Colman's Disease.

"On Saturday, June 19, unconscious of fear through ignorance of danger," continues George Colman in his Reminiscences, "I rushed into early publicity, as an avowed dramatist; my first comedy with songs, called 'Two to One,' intended to have been produced the previous summer, was brought forward introduced by an excellent prologue from my father. The allusions in it to the parent bird leading forth its young one, and to Dædalus and Icarus, were happily imagined, and as happily expressed, and to me were very touching. In the brief interval between the Prologue and the beginning of the play, I pressed my father's hand, and thanked him; my spirits were afloat, and he, old stager though he

was, appeared so much affected by my manner, that I—in short, I could not help shedding a few tears; it may be ridiculous perhaps to mention it here, but let those laugh who may, I do not envy them their feelings.

"On second thoughts, as the prologue spoken by Mr. Palmer may not be unwelcome to my readers, I introduce it here.

"To-night, as heralds tell, a virgin muse,
An untrained youth, a new adventurer, sues;
Green in his one-and-twenty, scarce of age,
Takes his first flight, half fledged, upon the stage.
Within this little round, the parent bird
Hath warbled oft; oft patiently you heard;
And, as he strove to raise his eager throat,
Your kind applause made music of his note.
But now, with beating heart, and anxious eye,
He sees his venturous youngling strive to fly;
Like Dædalus, a father's fears he brings,
A father's hopes, and fain would plume his wings.
How vain, alas, his hopes! his fears how vain!
'Tis you must hear, and, hearing, judge the strain.
Your equal justice sinks or lifts his name;
Your frown's a sentence, your applause is fame.
If humour warms his scenes with genial fire,
They 'll e'en redeem the errors of his Sire;
Nor shall his lead—dead to the bottom drop,
By youth's enlivening cork buoy'd up at top.
If characters are marked with ease and truth,
Pleased with his spirit, you 'll forgive his youth:
Should sire and son be both with dulness curs'd,
'And dunce the second follow dunce the first,'
The shallow stripling's vain attempt you 'll mock,
And damn him, for a chip of the old block.

"Puffs at the bottom of play-bills had not then arrived at their perfection; otherwise it would have been announced, that 'the musical comedy of Two

to One, having been received with unanimous and enthusiastic applause, would be repeated every evening till further notice: not an order to be admitted.' Its success, however, and its run were enough to satisfy my vanity, of which I had at that time a very superfluous share.

"Next morning, Sunday, brought in a day of rain: but wet weather could not damp my resolution of sallying forth to show myself. Myself, the author of Two to One, whose fame had been established in the British dominions on the preceding night, by a great house in a little theatre. Now, by the Gods! there is a pleasure in being a very great young coxcomb, which none but young coxcombs know! it is delightful to be intoxicated with the ether of conceit, and not to feel what an ass you are making of yourself.

"I had trudged for an hour under an umbrella, in the dirt and drizzle, before I recollected that my acquaintances in town were few, and that those few would not walk about in the rain upon the chance of falling in my way, to greet me on my triumphs. Nobody fished harder for compliments, and I got but one congratulatory bite during the day; this was from Frank North,* to whom I had never spoken, but knowing me by sight, he said, as he passed me in St. James's Street, 'Mr. Colman, allow me to wish you joy;' and never could any man wish me joy whose countenance and conversation were better calculated to inspire it. Soon after this we were introduced to each other; his con-

* Afterwards Earl of Guilford; he was second son of the then Lord North, the Prime Minister.

vivial wit, his flow of humour, his honourable principles, and his open generosity of heart, are too well known to require my record of them. I enjoyed his intimate friendship for many years, and our mutual regard remained unbroken and undiminished to the hour of his much lamented death. The loss of so dear a friend was a shock from which I could not soon recover, and I contemplate his memory with the sincerest affection."

The music of the songs of 'Two to One,' was composed by Dr. Arnold. The drama, in fact, proffered much promise of future excellence, and some epigrammatic lines in the newspapers, immediately after its representation, marked the public sense in its favour.

To George Colman, Esq. jun, on the deserved success of his Comedy 'Two to One.'

" Another writes because his father writ,
And proves himself a bastard by his wit:
So Young declaims—but you, by right divine,
Can claim a just, hereditary line;
By learning tutor'd as by fancy nurs'd
A *George the Second* sprung from *George the First.*" *

The words of the songs only were printed in 1784, but a transcript of the piece with Colman's autograph corrections is now in the Duke of Devonshire's Collections of the English drama. At the sale of the author's effects in Brompton-square, November 30, 1836, this and several other unpublished plays, were offered for competition; but as there were no bidders above the reserved prices,

* Very like John Taylor, afterwards one of the Proprietors of The Sun Newspaper.

they were withdrawn, and presented, by Mrs. Colman, to the Duke.

"The novelties, in this season at the Haymarket, "which followed 'Two to One,' were, 'The Mogul Tale,' 'Lord Russel,' 'Hunt the Slipper,' 'The Noble Peasant,' 'The Two Connoisseurs,' and 'Peeping Tom.'

"The 'Mogul Tale,'" says George Colman, "which turned upon the new invention of balloons, those ingenious inutilities which were then the rage, was Mrs. Inchbald's first production, public one, I mean, of which that fair lady was happily delivered; and her subsequent literary progeny have done great honour to their now deceased mamma. Parsons's performance in this piece of the chief character, a cobbler, was excellent. 'Hunt the Slipper,' a farce, by a clergyman,* was, if we are to believe the Biographia Dramatica, 'far from a dull piece;' this is negative praise; perhaps it stood like a half-way house between a heath and a forest, as near to barrenness as to fertility. 'The Noble Peasant,' a shelved comic opera, by Holcroft, had some very pretty music.† Hayley's tragedy of Lord Russel is better suited to the closet than to the stage; and his Two Connoisseurs, a comedy in rhyme, were not 'Hayley gaily;' the constant clinking of the verses was tiresome. O'Keeffe's Peeping Tom, upon the ticklish ground of Lady Godiva, keeps the

* Rev. Henry Knapp. It was surreptitiously printed in 1792, 12mo.

† It was acted through the season, after an equivocal reception on its first night.

stage to this day ; it is below some other efforts of this very entertaining and eccentric author, but it is very pleasant; its music particularly so. There has been no Peeping Tom equal to Edwin ; the nearest to him was Jack Bannister; and Bannister was admirable in many characters which Edwin could not touch."

When 'The Noble Peasant,' had been accepted by Colman, the manager wished that the opera should be composed by his musical director, Dr. Arnold, but it appears that Holcroft had in the first instance applied to Shield. A letter of the latter to Doctor Arnold, evinces a little want of harmony on his new ground.

" Saturday morning, Barlow Street.

" Sir,

" With this note I have sent 'The Noble Peasant,' written by Holcroft. I am very happy to find that I have your good wishes, and I beg leave to assure you that I shall receive particular pleasure whenever you are successful.

" It was a matter of indifference to me whether Mr. Colman played the above-mentioned opera with my music or not. But you generously refused setting it, when you were told that I had done part of it. This, as well as several other acts to which I have been a witness, convince me that those people who endeavoured to give me a different opinion of you, retailed falsehoods. Any person who is in the possession of the good sense and musical abilities of Dr. Arnold, despises the meanness of depreciating another in a public coffee-room, &c. It is only weak, envious people who can submit to degrade themselves in such an unwarrantable manner. The many works I have seen of yours, replete with knowledge and genius, made me ever respect you as a musician. For though I possess a spirit that will

not suffer an insult, it is not in my disposition to be guilty of any unjustifiable act towards you, consequently I never uttered a syllable against you in your professional line.

" If it is ever in my power to oblige you, you may command

Your most humble Servant,

Wm. Shield."

" P.S.—Anything that displeases you in the Opera shall be altered without hesitation.

" To Doctor Arnold."

Dr. Arnold was very intimate with both the Colmans. In 1766 he undertook the direction of the music of the Haymarket Theatre, having previously held the same situation at Covent Garden. In the discharge of these duties he composed about forty pieces, amongst which were 'The Maid of the Mill,' 'The Son in Law,' 'The Castle of Andalusia,' 'Inkle and Yarico,' 'The Battle of Hexham,' 'The Surrender of Calais,' 'The Children in the Wood, 'The Mountaineers,' &c., each containing beauties that never can be entirely forgotten. Of music of the graver cast he composed Dr. Brown's sacred ode 'The Cure of Saul,' the Oratorios of Abimelech, the Resurrection, and the Prodigal Son. The latter effort procured him the degree of Doctor of Music, at Oxford, when Lord North was installed as Chancellor. In 1769 he purchased Marylebone Gardens, then a place of fashionable resort; but this proved a bad speculation. In 1783 he was appointed organist and composer to the King, and in 1786 Dr. Arnold, encouraged by George III., commenced the publication of an edition in score of Handel's works. The

oratorios were conducted by him with great success for many years. He died in 1802, and was buried with more than usual marks of respect, in Westminster Abbey, of which he had been organist since 1793.

To return to the narrative of George Colman:

"Near the end of August I went to Paris, in consequence of an odd commutation of my father's design to send me into Switzerland for a year or two; a plan which I then dreaded, and now regret that it was abandoned; but at that time I considered Switzerland as another Scotland, and a sojournment there as a second exile. I could now be content and happy to repose for the remainder of my life, in any of its picturesque cantons, taking my fireside with me; regretting to leave some very few friends in England; and trusting for any other society to the honest folks among the Alps.* But a counsellor or two, with whom I had some interest, in my father's cabinet, represented to him my repugnance to the proposed scheme; and it was arranged that I should take an excursion, for only a month or six weeks, into France, to Paris, or any other place I pleased, among our Gallic neighbours, and then return, to commence, I groaned at the decree! the toilsome study of the law.

"Sending me across the Straits of Dover for a six weeks' tour, seemed to answer no other purpose than killing young master's time, and draining papa's

* I never read the account of Gibbon's house and garden, and his society at Lausanne, without wishing myself there. See Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, published by the late Lord Sheffield.

pocket; but there was deeper policy in it than appears upon the surface. I had not yet sowed my wild oats; and this diversion might serve to break off some London pursuits, which it was not advisable in me to continue.

"To trust so flighty a youth alone upon this gay excursion, was held to be as unwise as suffering him to continue an idler in town; a person, therefore, was chosen for my fellow-traveller, in the middle capacity of guardian and companion. This was an old officer in the navy, who had stuck in a lieutenancy for a sad number of years, an intimate acquaintance of my father's, a favourite of mine, a very poor and a very honourable gentleman. He volunteered going with me, and, as he had lived much in France, and was consequently supposed to be a proficient in the language, he was considered to be the very man for such a purpose; he had even a Gallic kind of air about him; but when we got to Calais, I found that, however, he might have a French look, he had very little indeed of the French tongue. The first *échantillon* he gave me of his power to *parley voo* was immediately after our landing, when he roared out to the beggars who flocked round us, '*Je vows donny riang.*' He was besides, not at all a man of the world; and, although it is not for me to say what sort of a bear I might be, I could scarcely have been danced by a more incompetent leader. His good-nature, however, was inexhaustible; and between my English French and his jargon, we worked our way up to Paris very sociably, and with little difficulty. As to French, I found that I could talk

it best after dinner; the polite natives always encourage a shy Englishman to chatter, in spite of his blunders; '*il faut hazarder*,' they tell him, and when a risk is to be run, it is wonderful how their champagne, burgundy, and claret, screw up a man's courage!

"Who but really long-sighted politicians, if such there be, could have anticipated, in this year of my first journey to France, the horrors which soon arose there? On going to the Opera at Paris in 1784, I found the house crammed, in consequence of young Vestris's re-appearance after his imprisonment for having refused to dance, on some occasion, at the Queen's command. The loyal parterre was so indignant at his contumacious conduct towards Majesty, that they insisted upon his asking pardon upon his knees; the young *Dieu de la Danse* did not, indeed, exactly obey this public mandate; for, after his many gesticulations of humility and contrition; the louder they called out '*à genoux! à genoux!*' the higher he capered, but in a very few years from this time, the enthusiasts for arbitrary monarchy confined the King and Queen virtually as prisoners in their own metropolis; then dethroned them, actually incarcerated them, and then cut off their heads!*

* During their stay at the Tuileries, I saw Louis Seize and Marie-Antoinette at military Mass, which by the by is something like taking Heaven by storm. The King looked fat and rather vacant, as if nothing had happened; the care-worn Queen was greatly altered since I had seen her at the Court of Versailles on my first journey; she had grown very much thinner, and appeared to be forcing a smile, but it was "smiling at grief."

" Beaumarchais had bitten the Parisians, and they were all *folle journée* mad. The translation of this play, under the title of 'Follies of a Day, or The Marriage of Figaro,' by Holcroft, was very well received at Covent Garden Theatre, in the same year. My friend Reynolds saw this French piece, as I did, in its run at Paris, I have, therefore, little to say about it, after the account given by so good a judge. I agree with him as to the perfect acting and the personal charms of the then fascinating Contat; the actress too who performed the page, I forget her name, was very pretty and very clever; but I do not coincide with my friend when he says, 'Molé, though then sixty, looked and performed the Count admirably:' he looked, in my eyes, a very respectable solid *sexagenaire*, and I thought his figure, like his acting, much too heavy for the *volage* Almaviva. Age does not much improve a man's fire nor his looks in the *rôles tendres;* but, after all, Almaviva can scarcely be classed among the tender lovers, unless the passion for all woman kind be considered as tenderness.

" There is a soliloquy in the above-mentioned play, spoken by Figaro, which delighted the audience, and is nearly as long as some of our modern sermons. How comes it that Frenchmen, who are reckoned a much more volatile nation than we are, not only tolerate but admire upon the stage, long winded speeches, and listen eagerly to narratives and declamations, which make sober John Bull either hiss or go to sleep? I can only account for this paradox by their considering, as a light people are

apt to do, their amusement to be matters of the utmost importance; and that they look upon every play as a subject for grave study, while we go to see them chiefly for relaxation.

" In regard to French acting, I mean only comic acting, the Italians and French seem to me to be altogether better gifted as performers than the English; generally speaking, they are more actors by nature, more vivacious, less *gauche* in their deportment; look at them in private life, even in the streets, and you are convinced of this. They represent their dramas throughout better than we do in England; every performer's attention, individually and collectively, is engaged in the business of the scene, from beginning to end; whereas many of our actors cease to act, the moment they have ceased to utter. In their provincial theatres, at least those which I have seen, their plays are better got up, to use a technical term, than in most of our playhouses out of London, and with none of those daubing mummers, and walking-stick lovers, whom we see in the country.

" Now and then indeed, with all the grace and ease of French manners, we may find some examples of coarseness upon their stage. One night at Lisle, I was at the representation of *Le Barbier de Seville*, in which a very pleasing and elegant lady performed the character of Rosina; after having sealed a letter, she made two or three attempts to blow out a wax taper, when, proving unsuccessful, she extinguished the light *à force de cracher:* but this I attribute to the inconsistencies of her country, rather than to

individual vulgarity in the performer, for the audience, so far from being shocked at the circumstance, took no notice of it whatever. It was only an instance of one of those anomalies observable in a nation so highly polished; a nation which made Sterne drollingly exclaim, when alluding to one of their very gross apostrophes, 'how my heart is wrung with pity and fellow-feeling, when I reflect what miseries must have been their lot, and how bitterly so refined a people must have smarted, to have forced them upon the use of it.' *

"For their tragedies, it is my humble opinion, which will bring all French and some English critics upon my back, there is not one grain of true nature, either in the authors or actors of them.

"On our return from Paris, I say our, for I must not forget my good-natured companion, who had so long been a lieutenant run to seed, that he had shot up, more through the courtesy of the world than his own assumption, into the title of captain. On our return—but hold—I had forgot to mention how my friend the Sea-captain had been newly rigged by a barber of the *rue St. Honoré*, in a formidable square wig, and how he crowded such a prodigious quantity of sail in the shape of curls and a toupée, that he was in danger of being blown out of the open barouche which we had hired of Dessein at Calais; and how I was dressed in the *outré* of Parisian puppyism, after the designs of the famed Monsieur Louis, the then fashionable French tailor, whereby

* See Sentimental Journey, under the head of "The Bidet."

we had made ourselves two of the greatest quizzes in our different styles, to be seen in a summer's day, or rather, to be correct in my chronology, a day late in the autumn.

" In our return then, for I must begin my period again, and I hope with better success in getting to the end of it, we stopped at Bethune, a town of Artois, dull enough in itself, but then greatly enlivened by the gallant *Régiment de Blaisois*, of which Monsieur Dillon, celebrated at the French Court as *le beau Dillon*, was Colonel, and also by a splendid company of Cuirassiers. Each of those corps was excellently appointed, and the officers belonging to them were the *élites* of well-bred military men. How different from those who soon succeeded them, the *canaille* who started into command in the revolutionary army !

" My companion luckily met in this town a gentleman to whom he had shown some civilities in England ; this was a lively, short, and very brown, Captain of the *Blaisois*, much respected and beloved by all the regiment ; he introduced us to all his brother officers, and to those of the Cuirassiers ; and with so earnest a recommendation, that it induced us to stay in the town for some little time. Colonel Dillon did us the honour to invite us every day to the mess, and postponed the dinner hour from twelve o'clock, such was the usage then, till one. Those with whom we sat down, put us perfectly at our ease, by making no fuss of their hospitalities, a proof of good taste which I had not met with in some houses where I had been a *convive*, and was

overwhelmed with attentions, insomuch that I was nearly starved in the midst of plenty. My anxious hosts at Paris, conceiving that an Englishman could really relish nothing but 'Rost Bif,' constantly crammed this food, which they do not know how to dress,* under my nose; and insisted in the excess of their kindness that I should eat that, and nothing else; in consequence, I was sometimes obliged to dine upon the burnt-up rib of a skinny ox, while longing for a delicious *fricandeau* standing near it.

"Our military friends at Bethune, although they did not attempt English cookery, desired us however to observe one custom after dinner, which they voted to be quite *à l'Anglaise*, '*mais, il faut de Ponche,*' they said; a bowl of what they thought punch was accordingly placed upon the table; it was nothing more than *Vin de Grave*, or some other light wine, very little diluted, made into negus, with slices of toasted bread floating at the top. The beverage was vastly pleasant, and promoted the 'hazarder' system capitally, for it made me venture my French at a prodigious rate.

"With these most agreeable folks we stayed a fortnight, including an excursion with two or three of them for a day and a night to Lisle, at the distance of about eighteen miles from their quarters. They made us acquainted with all the superior inhabitants, some of whom were of the *noblesse* in and near the town of Bethune; we attended balls, concerts, and *petits soupers* every night: and, on

* Nor how to spell it: they always write our 'Roast Beef of Old England' as I have given it in the text.

our departure, the brown little French officer, to whose introduction we were indebted for all these *agrémens*, accompanied us to England, whither he went almost every year, when peace between the two countries would permit him.

" The French land-captain was of great assistance to the English sea-captain, in settling our expenses upon the journey, for my companion had been terribly puzzled all the way in referring to the Book of Roads, and in consulting the Ordonnance as to how many *sows*, so he pronounced them, he should give to the post-boys at the end of every stage.*

" Once more in Soho Square, I found my father still firm in his resolution of making me a barrister; but aware of my flights, poetical and others, he was not quite so sanguine, in the fond hope of seeing me on the Woolsack, as many an old simple soul is who sends his plodding prodigy to the Inns of Court. He had been upon the alert in my absence, to effect his intentions, and had taken chambers for me up two pair of stairs in the Temple, having first entered my name as a student at Lincoln's Inn, where I afterwards kept a few Terms by eating oysters,† a custom taken I suppose from the fable,

* It was then, I know not what may be now the custom, for Englishmen to give the post-boys double the sum prescribed by the *ordonnance*.

† The students of Lincoln's Inn keep Term by dining, or pretending to dine, in the Hall during Term-time. Those who feed there, are accommodated, according to the homely fashion of the 'Olden Times,' with wooden trenchers instead of plates, and previously to the dinner, oysters are served up by way of prologue to the play. Eating the oysters, or going into the Hall without eating

and truly emblematical of a law-student's future practice; the whole process consisting in swallowing up the fish, and leaving the shells.

"To the above-mentioned chambers in the King's Bench Walk, my sire consigned me, having first sprinkled them with a prudential paucity of second-hand moveables; a tent bed, two tables, half-a-dozen chairs, and a carpet as much too scanty for the boards as Sheridan's 'rivulet of rhyme' for its 'meadow of margin;' to these he added about ten pounds worth of law books, which had been given to him in his own early Lincoln's-Inn days, by Lord Bath, with which he told me, mentioning the sum he should allow me *pro tempore*, I must work out my fortunes; then, enjoining me to labour hard, he left town upon a party of pleasure."

Mr. Colman however, in the above account, has all along blinked the true cause for this design on the part of his sire for transporting him to Switzerland. It is true, he admits, his father was aware of his flights poetical and others, and that in sending him across the Straits of Dover, there was deeper policy in it than appears upon the surface: the fact was, George had contracted an intimacy with Miss Catherine Morris, an actress belonging to the Haymarket Theatre, which intimacy the father considered it not advisable for him to continue. On his setting out for Paris, he also notices the wariness of his father in not

them if you please, and then departing to dine elsewhere, is quite sufficient for Term-keeping; there is, however, an expense attending all this, for so costly is law, that even its students, like clients, find their pockets the lighter for it.

daring to allow 'so flighty a youth *alone* upon this gay excursion.' Hopes were entertained that a separation for some time, might create a diversion that would end in coolness, and set aside the result which the father feared; and the fixing him in his legal studies would possibly arrest his attention. This was however to little purpose, for no sooner had the elder Colman left his son in the Temple and joined his party, than the immediate consequence was that he joined in a second trip to Scotland with Miss Morris, whom he married at Gretna Green, Oct. 3, 1784. This occasioned something like a hard run on the sum allowed him *pro tempore*, and the apprehensions of his father's resentment on learning his improvidence, impelled a silence on the transaction, for which no favourable opportunity of disclosure occurred till November 1788, when, with the father's sanction, they were publicly married on the 10th of that month at Chelsea Church, and the affair was openly avowed.

Colman the younger thus resumes his narrative:—

"Among the residents in the same staircase, I had the good fortune to find one with whom it was a great pleasure to me, and no less advantage, to cultivate a neighbourly intercourse, which every body will readily conceive, when I mention the name of Jekyll. He made me a welcoming and a welcome visit on my arrival at my new abode; and glancing over the articles of my establishment, observed a piece of frivolity I had brought with me, which must have appeared to him, as he was then practising at the bar, a great interruption to the

study of Coke upon Littleton. This was a round cage with a squirrel in it. He looked for a minute or two, at the little animal which was performing the same operation as a man in the tread-mill, or a donkey in the wheel, and then quietly said, 'Ah! poor devil! he is going the Home Circuit!' if locality can make a good thing better, this technical joke was particularly happy from being uttered in the Temple.

"I commenced my second drama on the morning of the 20th of December, 1784, a remarkable day in the annals of modern learning; for I had not written half an hour when I was interrupted by the intelligence that the funeral procession of the great Doctor Johnson was on its way from his late residence in Bolt Court, down Fleet-street, to Westminster Abbey.

"I threw down the pen, and ran forth from my two pair of stairs chambers in the Temple to gaze at the mournful train attendant upon the corpse of this literary Leviathan; but was disappointed in my expectations of its grandeur. Garrick's sepulchral pomp which I had witnessed five years previously, when I was soon to leave Westminster School, had been much more splendid and imposing.

"The only principal mourners on the present occasion were, I believe, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great Edmund Burke, Sir John Hawkins, my father, and the deceased Doctor's black man.* Among others who attended were Doctor Horsley, General Paoli, Hoole the translator of Metastasio, with several holders-up of conspicuous authors' tails, I mean

* Francis Barber, his old and faithful servant.

commentators and printers, such as Stevens, Malone, Nichols, and others. But, however inferior to Garrick's funeral solemnities, I deemed Johnson's obsequies fully sufficient, for I was then so bigoted to theatricals that I looked upon the stage as the only field in which the lasting leaves of bay were to be gathered; and I contemplated the mighty Johnson only as a minor dramatist, whose tragedy of Irene had not been so popular as the musical comedy of Two to One!

"It did not then occur to me, or at least I left it out of the account, that his prologue for opening Drury Lane theatre, in 1747, was a specimen of dramatic poetry to live in fame for ages; that he had besides acquired a vast stock of erudition, that he had put forth the stupendous labour of his English Dictionary, that his moral and political writings, his poems entitled 'London,' and the Vanity of Human Wishes, his Rasselas, his Rambler, his Preface to Shakspeare's Works, and his Lives of the Poets, were each of them, separately, enough to immortalize a memory. Alas! alas! I thought not of all this, nor of any thing much, at that time, but myself and my musical comedy; and when a play scribbling younker is inflated with a little temporary or rather trumpery success, he may, like a lover described by the bard,

Bestride the gossamer,
And yet not fall, so light is vanity!

"While in this state of vain-glorious intoxication, I attributed, of course, all the applause my first production had obtained purely to its own intrinsic

merits; not setting down one particle of the approbation to encouragement bestowed on boyish promise. On the contrary, I conceived that, having once felt the pulse of the public, I was thoroughly acquainted with its constitution; that I had taken measure of the town's taste, and knowing now exactly how to fit it, I could lead the play-going world in a string. Oho! said I mentally, if Two to One has tickled them so much, I shall tickle them a great deal more the next time: so down I sat again on my return from the Doctor's funeral procession to be most inveterately comical, and even to outdo myself.

"I did outdo myself at a furious rate! I doubled all the faults of my first composition in my second. Instead of splashing carelessly with a light brush, I now deliberately laid it on with a trowel; to say nothing of the flimsiness and improbability of my plot I laboured so much to sparkle in dialogue, studied so deeply for antitheses, quibbles, and puns,

'And glittering thoughts struck out at every line,'

that I produced a very puerile and contemptible performance, a second musical comedy in three acts, under the title of 'Turk and no Turk.'

"This piece however was received much better than it deserved, and without one dissentient voice, on July 9th; it was acted however only ten nights in the summer of 1785; and, to the very slight scratch my *amour propre* received, but which I would not confess scarcely to myself, I applied the flattering unction from Horace of *decies repetita placebit:*

but I could not be so blinded by youthful coxcombry as not to suspect that I had been a little mistaken in the measure I had taken of the town.

" Several years after this, when I became manager of the Haymarket theatre, I raked out this same play from the Prompter's closet, in hopes that it might be useful as junk, and as there was some sprightly music in it, would cut down to a good actable farce. I read it, blushed, and tore the copy to tatters. The Prompter told me that there was no other copy remaining, and that I had made a breach in the archives of the Little theatre; I heartily hope and trust that he was correct in his statement.*

" Wretched as the above effort was, I must in my earlier days have had some right notions of dramatic construction, otherwise I could not have succeeded at all; and, having succeeded, it is no wonder that I could not at once see all my very great deficiencies; when so many who have not the remotest idea of what is fit for the stage, complain vehemently of their dramas having been rejected.

" My ' Turk and no Turk,' doffed his turban to make room for Mrs. Inchbald's ' I'll Tell you What,' a five-act comedy of much merit; which was, on its first production, excellently acted in most of its characters. Among the prominent performers in this play, were Palmer, Parsons, Bensley, Mrs. Stephen Kemble, and I forget the rest. It had lain

* Colman has here effected a flourish upon fancy, and has written what was not strictly true. The transcript, with his own autograph corrections, was among those Manuscripts presented by Mrs. Colman, to the Duke of Devonshire.

for some time in the dark, upon the manager's shelf, like a jewel in the ground, and there it would probably, have lain for some time longer, if the success of her farce, 'The Mogul Tale,' had not roused his attention to the authoress's talents; this induced him to revise the dormant manuscript, and to produce it to the public.

"Besides Mrs. Inchbald's good play, and my own bad one, there was no novelty worth mentioning this summer at the Haymarket Theatre, except 'Here and There and Everywhere,' a speaking pantomime, which did not speak much for itself in the representation.

"The Theatre in September, 1785, having closed its season on the 15th, as usual, my father went to Margate, which was his favourite watering-place.* He had not gone to the coast as an invalid, but for the first three weeks, or rather more, after his coming to Margate, he bathed daily in the sea, from which he apparently derived much benefit, and felt, as he repeatedly said, that he was laying in a stock of health for the ensuing winter.

"One morning on his return in high spirits from the bath, he could not help observing, as he sat down

* Our readers must not picture Margate as it at present stands. They must imagine at the period we mention it as a little quiet sea-bathing place, visited by those who *would* venture by water, in what were commonly called the 'Hoys,' with some delay, and even sea-sickness. Now the celerity of the steam-boats, their excellent accommodation, the restricted prices, enable everybody to take a healthful trip; and where in the year 1785, two hundred persons visited, we may safely say five thousand may now be enumerated, as "birds of passage."

before the glass to shave, the improvement in his looks; and, having performed the usual operations of the toilette, he ate a remarkably hearty breakfast. His carriage then came to the door, in which he was to take his friend Doctor Arnold, who had been on a visit to him, as far as Canterbury, on his way to London.

"Arnold had already stepped into the carriage, and my father was following him, when he recollected that he had left a small bunch of keys which he always carried in his pocket, on the table of his dressing-room; he returned for them into the house, and was ascending the staircase, at a quick pace, when he was seized with paralysis; one half of his frame was severely affected, the limbs on that side had entirely lost their power; and, on the other side, he held by the railing of the stairs, unable to call for assistance.

"In this deplorable situation he was discovered by his valet-de-chambre, who happened to be coming down; and when supported by the servant, my poor father instinctively put up that hand which had escaped the shock to his face, that he might ascertain, as he afterwards told me, whether the mouth and features had suffered; but in that instance, it had pleased Providence to spare him.

"By this time, the alarm had been given in the house, by the servant's cry for help. Arnold, who unluckily in such a conjecture, was not a Doctor of Medicine, but a Doctor of Music, rushed from the carriage to his friend; and, having seen him conveyed to bed, hurried out for a medical practitioner,

with whom he and my father were acquainted, and who was residing *pro tempore* in the neighbourhood.

"This gentleman was a Doctor R., I shall not give his name at full. He was a protégé of the late Lord Abingdon, through whom my father first knew him;* he was also, like many of his learned brethren of Warwick-lane, who overstock the town, by no means encumbered with patients, and therefore visited Margate during the season, upon the speculation of meliorating his fortunes by picking up customers. At certain periods of the year, a London physician in want of employment is as naturally stationed at a watering-place as an empty hackney-coach is drawn up on the stand; and as to the articles thus severally in waiting for a fee and a fare, whether we call a coach or a doctor, the chances are against our getting a good one.

"Whatever Doctor R.'s skill might have been, I do not pretend to determine, but he proceeded to act upon my father with that decisive energy which may, perhaps, be requisite in a case where life or death must be set upon a cast. He was very profuse in blistering the patient, which for aught I know might have been perfectly proper; the application, however, of these stimulants was followed by great excitement; and my father was for two or three days in a state of something more than delirium; in his paroxysms he tore off the blisters, and expressed his

* The late Lord Abingdon had a passion for music, and Doctor R. was so thorough a disciple of Apollo, that he studied both physicking and fiddling; *in utrumque paratus;* hence the Peer's patronage of the Doctor.

abhorrence of the doctor in terms of fury. Before my arrival at Margate, his disorder had fluctuated; sometimes he raged, then subsided into a sullen calm for some hours, then raged again; and for a week or two after my arrival, the same frightful symptoms of a disturbed judgment now and then recurred.

"About three weeks or a month after his departure from town, I was thrown into great alarm by the arrival of a messenger sent express, with the intelligence that my father had been suddenly taken ill, that the delay of some days in apprising me of it had arisen from the hope of his getting better, and the desire to spare me from a shock before there was an actual necessity for it; but that now he was so much worse that his life was in imminent danger.

"This afflicting news reached me about ten o'clock at night; and before eleven, I was in a post-chaise with Jewell the treasurer, my old hack travelling companion upon all emergencies, on the high road to Margate.

"Travelling in the dead of night when darkness is unpropitious to speed, and without an *avant courier* to rouse the slumbering retainers of the different inns, that relays might be ready against our arrival, considerably retarded a progress which required more than common expedition: we lost nearly half an hour at the end of every stage in changing horses; and it was between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon, before we were set down at the house which my father had hired in Margate.

"My anxiety was a little relieved on finding that he had passed a tolerably tranquil night, and that

the apprehension of immediate danger was not so great as on the previous day. I hastened to his bedside, he could speak but little; and, indeed, orders had been given that he should be kept as quietly as possible, and prevented from talking at all: he informed me, however, that he was extremely discontented with the medical adviser who had been called in, that he had quarrelled with him, but that he still continued to attend. A quarrrel under such circumstances seemed very strange; and it then occurred to me for the first time, that in the agitation of the moment, and the hurry of leaving town, I had been guilty of a most absurd omission, by bringing the playhouse treasurer with me instead of a physician; it was like running to assist at a conflagration without an engine, or a single bucket of water to extinguish the flames.

"To repair this blunder Jewell was instantly put upon the fatiguing duty of returning to London with instructions to bring back with him Doctor Warren, the Sir Henry Halford of his day, if his aid could be procured; and of which I had some faint hope, notwithstanding his great practice, as he was one of my father's old friends, and his associate in the Literary Club; or if such attendance could not be had, to obtain that of some other gentlemen of the faculty whom Doctor Warren might recommend.

"When Jewell had started, which was in about an hour after we had arrived, I then heard the details of what had happened, and which I have related.

"Doctor Warren's extensive practice would not admit of his leaving London, but he had recom-

mended a learned brother who had accompanied him, Jewell, from London. This *locum tenens* of Warren was Dr. Harvey.; the registrar I believe, at that time, of the College of Physicians, a gentleman of repute in his profession, and of formality in his appearance. He seemed to cherish those outward personal dignities which had even then almost disappeared of the old school doctors; and wore a grave suit in which he might have gone to court instead of coming to Margate, with his hair in a bag. Jewell and he formed a grotesque pair of travelling companions; the treasurer's nankeens and blue silk stockings were a fine contrast to the registrar's full dressed sad-coloured * clothes, his stand-up collar, his three cut steel buttons on the cuffs of his coat, and his three more on the flaps of each pocket over his rump.

" When Dr. Harvey had made his appearance, Dr. R. retreated in dudgeon. I do not mean to hold up this last gentleman as the most luminous among the descendants of Æsculapius, but I doubt whether he was fairly treated; for much obloquy was cast upon him by my father, who talked loudly of his deficiencies in professional skill; such evidence, however was not only *ex-parte*, but questionable on the score of *mens sana* in the witness; and, therefore, should not have been admitted to the prejudice of a physician's reputation.

" Be this as it may, whatever had been the merits

* *Sad*, in olden times was synonymous with dark—" I met him accidentally in London in sad-coloured clothes."
Walton's Life of Bishop Sanderson.

or errors of Doctor R.'s system, Doctor Harvey proceeded upon opposite principles, which were more successful: insomuch that after a stay of two or three days, finding he had removed all danger, he returned to town; repeating his visits to Margate, costly visits for the sick! once a week for the space of a month, and then pronounced the patient equal to a removal to London, and to the resumption of his worldly avocations.

"I was not aware while he lived, that my father, previously to 1789, had certain moments of secret despondency, arising from a consciousness that, however long he might linger, the blow which he had received from paralysis was the dismal harbinger of death; but on looking over some of his papers which came into my possession, I found a trait which convinced me of it.

"He had long been in the habit of purchasing those annual pocket-books with pages arranged for the insertion of short memoranda, and was very precise in making entries of his dinner engagements, and various casual occurrences; in his book for 1785, he had particularly noted the day of the month on which he was so suddenly stricken by disease, and under it there appeared, in very large characters of his own writing,

'HÆRET LATERI LETHALIS ARUNDO:'

his adoption of this half line from Virgil, presenting the picture of a wounded deer still ranging the forest, with the deadly arrow sticking in its side, was too plainly allusive to himself to be mistaken: and

too mournfully expressive of his feelings to fail of giving a shock to my own.

" In the last fortnight of my father's convalescence at Margate, ' the clouds that lowered upon our house ' were not exactly ' in the deep bosom of the Ocean buried,' although the Ocean was so near; but all apprehensions for the time being dissipated, I resumed my cheerfulness, took my morning rides to Ramsgate, Broadstairs, &c., went to the libraries and the Assembly-room, and even began to crack my juvenile and ill-judged jokes on his medical attendant, the solemn Doctor Harvey; jokes which were very ill taken if taken at all.

" If my attempts at pleasantry were unacceptable or incomprehensible to the Doctor, they were better understood but much worse received by the Apothecary—I beg pardon, I should have put Surgeon before Apothecary, and Accoucheur after it, for so did this personage designate himself. He was a constant resident at Margate, and kept one of those show-shops for chymicals and galenicals which you pass at night, in peril of being blinded by the glare of cochineal and other dies from huge globular glass bottles stuck up in the windows, while those in the dark who espy you at a distance, take you for a red man, or a green, or a blue, or an orange-tawny. His name was Silver, and when things began to go well, he dropped in only twice in the twenty-four hours to inquire ' How are we to-day ?' and ' How do we feel ourselves this evening ?' Previously to this, he had been in daily attendance for hours together.

" I had but one solitary jest to shoot off against this Knight of the Pestle; but from its repetition and its absurdity, it excited great irritation in the party at whom it was levelled; it consisted simply in applying to Mr. Silver the old Proverb which states, 'that all is not gold that glitters,' and in pronouncing it according to the orthography of former days, of which we have innumerable instances in the old authors, particularly in Shakspeare, who introduces this very adage in his Merchant of Venice, where the Prince of Morocco reads a scroll contained in one of Portia's caskets, beginning with

'All that glisters is not gold.'

" Wherever I met Mr. Silver, whether I met him in my father's chamber, or popped upon him at the turning of a corner in Margate, which happened at least ten times a-day, I was always sure to salute him with, 'Mr. Silver, all is not gold,' &c., and he was as sure to answer in great wrath, 'Sir, you have told me that before.' He must have hated me in his heart; had I 'needed poison,' he would have been not only 'the caitiff wretch to sell it me,' but to give it me for nothing. Between my extreme nonsense, and his being in a passion at it, it may be difficult to say which was the greatest fool of the two.

" Even Jewell, who remained with us, grew facetious, and hazarded a fling or two at the Margate Galen; but Monsieur l'Apothicaire beat him out of the field at raillery, an easy victory, though the conqueror always celebrated it by a triumph.

Jewell's great delight, while here, was a morning dip in the sea; he preferred it at this place particularly, because, as he said, 'the machines had got a *yanning*,' by which he meaned those tilts thrown out at the end of the vehicle to screen the bather from view, and protect him from the weather, commonly called an awning.

"Among my father's friends who were then at Margate, and who first made congratulatory visits to him on the improving state of his health, were Messrs. Bearcroft and George Keate. The first of these, Bearcroft, had attained celebrity at the bar, and was at that time of I know not what rank in his profession; I have no documents on my table to ascertain the honours in jurisprudence to which he arrived, and I humbly submit, that it is not incumbent upon me to hunt after them.

"The time was now ripe for bringing my father to London; he was conveyed thither without fatigue, by breaking the journey into easy divisions; he slept on the first night at Sittingbourne, on the next at Dartford, and on the third day he reached his house in Soho Square, but sadly altered from the time of his leaving it, in the short space of two months. He came home wrapped in flannels, the limbs of half his body lifeless, and the deadly arrow to which he had so gloomily alluded, rankling in his side!

"I have always dated the beginning of his derangement from the time of this illness, and considered it as the prologue to the tragedy which followed. I am confirmed in this opinion by all

the professional men who were consulted on the occasion.

"His case was simply this; he had gout in his habit, which had been indicated so slightly, that he neglected the hints to take care of himself which nature had mildly thrown out. Cold bathing is perhaps one of the most dangerous luxuries in which an elderly man can indulge, when so formidable an enemy is lurking in his constitution. The gout having been repelled by repeated submersion in the sea, not only paralyzed the body, but distempered the brain, and Reason was subverted.

"But, from the earliest sparks of his disorder at the end of 1785, till it blazed forth unequivocally in June 1789, an interval of rather more than three years and a half, and again from the last mentioned year to the time of his decease, there was nothing of that 'second childishness and mere oblivion,' which his biographers have attached to his memory.

"The assertion that his gradually increasing derangement left him in 'a state of idiotism,' is directly the reverse of fact. His mind, instead of having grown progressively vacant till it became a blank, was, in the last stages of his malady, filled, like a cabalistic book, with delusions, and crowded with the wildest flights of morbid fancy; it was always active, always on the stretch; and, so far from his exhibiting that moping fatuity which obscured the last sad and silent days of Swift, it might have been said of him, 'how pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness which reason and sanity would not so prosperously be delivered of.'

" It must be admitted that on his coming to town, after his partial recovery from his severe illness at Margate, he was not so capable of directing his domestic affairs and managing his dramatic business as previously; he might even discover to those who had opportunities of observing him closely, the marks of approaching distraction, but not the advance of infantile imbecility: he also suffered under several fits of epilepsy; when the greatest alertness was exercised by plunging him instantly into a hot slipper-bath to prevent the immediate termination of his existence; but, whenever free from these attacks, he was busily occupied in preparing for his summer seasons in the Haymarket theatre, and in writing.

" His spirit struggled against disease, and he insisted upon pursuing his wonted avocations. No one about him could then control his will; but, in the business of his theatre, in which he continued to exert himself beyond his strength, I endeavoured, as far as I could, and with due respect, to assist him without appearing to do so, for he was extremely jealous of the least interference in his concerns."

CHAPTER VII.

1785—1794.

Horace Walpole—William Cowper—Charles Bannister—Colman's Publications after his Illness—The Royalty Theatre—John Palmer—Mrs. Gibbs—Master Braham, and Signora Storace—Cumberland—Miss Farren—The Country Attorney—Inkle and Yarico—Jekyll—Ways and Means—Epilogue—Relapse of Colman—Colman, Junior, manages the Haymarket—Miles, Peter Andrews — William Augustus Miles — Miss George—Dreadful Catastrophe at the Haymarket—Death of the Elder Colman—List of his Dramas—John Bannister—New Drury.

THE following letter to George Colman the elder, from Horace Walpole, accompanied a presentation copy, by him, of the Duc de Nivernois' 'Translation of Walpole's Essay on Modern Gardening.' The original and the version are printed together on alternate pages. Walpole had a press in his house at Strawberry-hill, among other little conceits in his villa.

"SIR, Strawberry-hill, Sept. 19, 1785.

"I beg your acceptance of a little work just printed here, and I offer it as a token of my gratitude, not as pretending to pay you for your last present. A translation however excellent from a very inferior Horace, would be a

most inadequate return; but there is so much merit in the inclosed version, the language is so pure and the imitations of our poets so extraordinary, so much more faithful and harmonious than I thought the French tongue could achieve, that I flatter myself you will excuse my troubling you with an old performance of my own when newly dressed by a master hand. As, too, there are not a great many copies printed, and those only for presents, I have particular pleasure in making you one of the earliest compliments,

And am, Sir, your most obliged,

And obedient humble servant,

HORACE WALPOLE."

The intimacy which had subsisted between Colman and Cowper, appears to have ceased at the period when, in December 1763, the pure mind of the latter sunk under the severest sufferings of morbid depression, partly arising from the terrors of his appointment of Reading Clerk, and Clerk of the Private Committees of the House of Lords. His tranquillity was at length restored, and he recovered from the anxiously dreaded mental derangement in which he seemed engulphed. In August 1785, Cowper, in a letter to his friend Unwin, observes,— "I have had more comfort, far more comfort, in the connexions that I have formed within the last twenty years, than in the more numerous ones which I had before." The fame of the second volume of his poems, then recently published, now suggested the idea that some profit might be achieved in the publication by subscription of his translation of Homer. Accordingly we find him busy in all directions, soliciting the comforting co-operation of even

the by-gone friends of his early days. Cowper's letter to Unwin, dated December 24, 1785, expresses his determination to abide by his purpose of the subscription, notwithstanding Johnson the publisher's advice to the contrary. He adds, "I met with encouragement from all quarters, such as I find need of indeed in an enterprise of such length and moment, but such as at the same time I find effectual. Homer is not a poet to be translated under the disadvantage of doubts and dejection!"

In this exigency Cowper thus addressed the friend of his early days:

"DEAR COLMAN, Olney, Bucks, Dec. 27, 1785.

"For though we have not had any intercourse for more than twenty years, I cannot find in my heart to address you by any other style; and I am the rather encouraged to the use of that in which I formerly addressed you, by a piece of intelligence that I received not long since from my friend Hill,* who told me that you had inquired after me of him, and had said something about an intention to write to me. I took pretty good care that you should not be ignorant of my having commenced author, by sending you my volume. The reason why I did not send you my second was, because you omitted to send me your Art of Poetry, which in a splenetic mood I suppose, I construed into a prohibition; but Hill's subsequent information has cured me of that malady, so far as you were concerned.

"Once an author and always an author. This you know, my friend, is an axiom and admits of no dispute; in

* Joseph Hill, Esq., who, with Lord Chancellor Thurlow, was one of Cowper's earliest associates, and continued to be his confidential correspondent through life. His name appears in the second volume of Cowper's Poem, prefixed to some verses of exquisite elegance.

my instance at least it is likely to hold good, for I have more leisure than it is possible to dispose of without writing. Accordingly I write every day, and have every day been writing since I last published, till at last I have made such progress in a new translation of Homer into blank verse, that I am upon the point of publishing again.* Hitherto I have given away my copies, but having indulged myself in that frolic twice, I now mean to try whether it may not prove equally agreeable to get something by the bargain. I come, therefore, humbly to solicit your vote and interest, and to beg that you will help me in the circulation of my proposals, for I shall print by subscription. On such occasions you know a man sets every wheel in motion, and it would be strange indeed, if not having a great many wheels to move, I should leave unattempted so important a one as yourself. As soon as I have your permission I shall order my bookseller to send you some papers.

"The news informed me of your illness, which gave me true concern, for time alone cannot efface the traces of such a friendship as I have felt for you, no, nor even time with distance to help it. The news also told me that you were better, but to find that you are perfectly recovered, and to see it under your own hand will give the greatest pleasure to one, who can honestly subscribe himself to this day,

Your very affectionate,

Wm. Cowper.

"I enclose this with a letter to Johnson, my publisher, to whom I am obliged to have recourse for your address."

Colman had at this period a disagreement with the elder Bannister (his principal bass singer), as

* Cowper in a letter to Park, written in March 1792, recounts the events of his youth as sport in frivolities:—"At fifty years of age I commenced an author: it is a whim that has served me longest and best, and will probably be my last!"

the following letter addressed to Dr. Arnold will evince.

" DEAR ARNOLD, Bath, April 13, 1786.

" Bannister after entering into and indeed writing another treaty, has at length broken off in so insolent and scandalous manner, that I really should be sorry to agree with him. In the list of inquirers after me in Soho Square, I have Reinhold's name; for I suppose it must be our vocal friend. If you think him well and able, and if he can come to town for the summer, as I see he intended for the Lent, I can certainly make it well worth his while to pass the season at the Haymarket. The sooner our agreement is made, if made at all, the better; because it then will be clear that Bannister, by mere impudence and unprincipled impertinence has shut himself out of the theatre.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Arnold, Great Pulteney Street, Golden Square. G. COLMAN."

Colman produced a variety of miscellaneous poems and papers, which he republished, in three volumes, in 1787, a year or two before what may be termed his intellectual demise. As a scholar, he holds a very respectable rank, by his translation of the comedies of Terence, and Horace's Art of Poetry. The reader of almost every periodical publication of note,* has been indebted to him also for much information and amusement.

Of his father's literary occupations and health at this time, George Colman, junior, thus speaks:

" During the period, from the beginning of 1786

* More especially the St. James's Chronicle.

to 1789, he published two or three volumes of Miscellanies, consisting partly of his old fugitive poetry and prose, and partly of new matter; he composed a pamphlet containing 'Some Particulars of his Life,' to be edited, as a posthumous memoir, by his executor. He constructed also a slight musical entertainment,* in one act, founded on one of Hogarth's prints, and successfully produced it at his own theatre, only one month before his ultimate confinement, when the Court of Chancery placed his person and estate under my care. Did all this look like a gradual descent to drivelling? a term which, let me be permitted to acknowledge, I cannot quote, when applied to my father, without impatience and disgust.

"I may be asked, however, what was his state of mind after I had the care of him; that question I answer by recording a very extraordinary effort of his brain, while in such a situation.

"He had often comparatively lucid intervals of days and weeks; during one of these he inquired of me the fate of my play called 'The Battle of Hexham,' which had been recently brought out, and was my first attempt at that mixed kind of drama. I gave him some account of it, when he said, 'George, I will show you how such a piece ought to be written;' and, in about a week afterwards, he put into my hand a one act drama which he had just finished, on a subject selected from the Arabian

* Called "*Ut Pictura Poesis;* or, the Enraged Musician."

Nights' Entertainments; it was in perfectly regular and well measured blank verse, the story was clearly told, and the conduct of the scenes altogether evinced the stage knowledge of a practised veteran; sometimes there were strange romantic thoughts and rhapsodies, which betrayed an imagination influenced by the moon; but they manifested anything rather than intellect involved in the darkness of idiotic night."

Nothing remarkable occurred until June 1787, when Mr. John Palmer opened the Royalty Theatre, in Wellclose-square, Goodman's Fields, under the idea that the magistrates of the Tower Hamlets were empowered by the royalty of that fortress to license the performance of plays. Messrs. Harris, Linley, and Colman persisted in a determination to oppose the speculation. On the opening night, Palmer read an address to the audience, in which he stated that

"This theatre was built under a letter of approbation from the Lieutenant Governor of the Tower; and being situated in a palace and fortress, in a district immediately within his jurisdiction, his consent, added to a licence obtained from the magistrates, authorising a place of public entertainment, was deemed legal authority.

"The first stone of the building was laid on the 26th of December, 1785; at that time the managers of the theatres at the West end of the town, made no kind of objection. In the course of last summer when I performed at the little Theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Colman wrote a prologue, which I

spoke on my benefit night; and among others, were the following lines:

> "For me, whose utmost aim is your delight,
> Accept the humble offering of this night;
> To please, wherever plac'd, be still my care,
> At Drury, Haymarket, or Wellclose Square."

Colman to exculpate himself from the charge in these lines, inserted a paragraph in the public prints, declaring that he did it in consequence of Mr. Palmer's statement that he had sufficient authority for his plan, and that as he did not intend to open his new theatre in the summer, he of course could not interfere with the interests of the Haymarket house, whereas Mr. Palmer, in contradiction to his promise, opened in June.

A threatening notice, moreover, signed by Thomas Linley, Thomas Harris, and George Colman, acquainted Palmer that instructions were given "to lodge informations against him for every appearance he should make in any play, or scene of a play, at any unlicensed theatre, contrary to the statute." This alarmed Palmer, and he closed the Royalty until July 3, when he re-opened it with a variety of musical, scenic, and pantomimic exhibitions. In his company, at that time, were the elder Bannister, Leoni the singer, his pupil master Braham, Mrs. Gibbs, then very young, and Mrs. Wells. Miss Wilkinson, afterwards Mrs. Mountain, also performed at the Royalty Theatre.

On April 21, 1787, Braham appeared at Covent Garden Theatre for the first time on any stage, for

the benefit of Leoni. "At the end of the opera," observes a critic of the day, "Master Braham, a pupil of Leoni, sung 'The Soldier Tir'd,' with excellent taste and judgment. His voice is clear and harmonious, free and unembarrassed in his person, with an open countenance. There cannot be a doubt of his becoming a great favourite of the public." Upon this trial, Palmer engaged Braham for the Royalty Theatre.

It is worthy of remark, that in the same week Signora Storace made her first appearance at the Italian Opera, in Paesiello's Opera 'Gli Schiavi per Amore.' She was the daughter of Storace, the predecessor of Gariboldi on the bass, and her mother was the sister of Dr. Trusler. She had every foreign advantage, and among the best, the school of Allegranti. Her lower notes were the best. Though not beautiful, she was interesting. She had then the *en bon point charmante* of twenty-two.

It is an odd circumstance, considering the long subsequent connection between Mr. Braham and Madame Storace, that they should have made their *débuts*, before the London public within three days of each other.

A comedy by Cumberland, entitled 'The Country Attorney,' was played for the first time, on Saturday, July 7, 1787. The author in his Memoirs,* simply notices the fact, that he brought it out at the summer theatre when it was under the direction of

* Vol. II., p. 278.

the elder Mr. Colman. Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby, appears to have thrown some obstacle, amounting almost to a refusal of the part for which she was cast, and Colman wrote to the author to intimate his purpose that Mrs. Brooks should play the character. We here give Cumberland's reply.

" Saturday Morning, June 30, 1787.

" My Dear Sir,

" Miss Farren is a spoiled child, and has done us more mischief by her hesitation than she could have done by a more peremptory refusal. I never saw Mrs. Brooks, but cannot doubt your judgment in putting the part into her hands, and shall thoroughly approve of whatever you direct. At the same time, if you think that the cast throughout is such as to make the success more doubtful than ought to be risked, I shall perfectly acquiesce in your opinion for withdrawing it. On the contrary, if you approve of its representation, I have not the least hesitation about any cast you shall give it, nor shall ever impute its failure to any cause but its own weakness. I own I shall be truly sorry to give a blow to your theatre, when I am so anxious to contribute the best help in my power. If Bannister is pleasant with his part, I think we have no great cause to fear, and I shall cheerfully come forward. Mrs. Brooks's part is so short that she will not impede the production, and I hope Mr. Aickin is now content; I presume he is, by your not mentioning anything to the contrary.

" With respect to an epilogue, I was in hopes you would have given me one; I am a very bad hand at it myself, and if your business is too pressing to turn your thoughts to the task, perhaps you can find a friendly poet in the humour to help us. In the mean time I will tack a few rhymes

together as well as I can, and send them up to you, that no stop may be made at all events.

I am, with great sincerity,
Dear Sir,
Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,
R. CUMBERLAND."

Colman thought the flirtation of the actress might be subdued by a solicitation from the author, when little was to be expected from the interference of the manager, and suggested that proceeding to Cumberland, who in reply communicated a transcript of his application, which it must be confessed is rather *toady*. Perhaps it was the fashion of the authors of that day, or the chance might be, that Cumberland, as an old stager, outdid his brethren by flattery, but it was to him, as the creator of a work, a debasement.

"DEAR SIR,

"In obedience to your commands I write this very morning to Miss Farren as follows:

"As you are born to have all mankind at your feet, you will not refuse the addresses of an old poet, who is as much devoted to your fame as any man can be. I am convinced that it is not in my power either to write it up or to write it down; that having tried hard for the former attempt in the character of Lady Paragon, I now put your excellence to the proof, by desiring you to convince the town that Lady Rustic cannot diminish your reputation with the public, and will greatly add to your private merits by protecting the weak and feeble, who cannot stand without your support.

"Your hesitation to receive it shows only your judgment, but your acceptance will be a proof of your good

nature. Now I am so certain that the latter motive will prevail with you for condescending to my humble Rustic, that I anticipate my thanks, and accept the favour as one which I shall strain my powers in future to repay, &c."

"I hope my suit will mollify, and I really do not doubt it. I thank you for the hint.

Adieu,

R. CUMBERLAND."

Miss Farren, on certain conditions, relented, and Colman apprised the author of the terms. To this communication Cumberland thus replied :

"Tunbridge Wells, Tuesday, 11 o'clock,

"MY DEAR SIR, July 3, 1787.

"I have just received your letter signifying Miss Farren's commands for transposing her introductory scene to the second act; be it so, but I conclude it will be done with the hand of a master, or that you will transpose it yourself, therefore I rest in peace. For heaven's sake write her an Epilogue. I have plunged from thought to thought in the profound of nonsense, and can fix on nothing; one sense is left me, the sense of your kindness.

Farewell,

R. CUMBERLAND."

The Country Attorney was produced on Saturday, July 7, 1787, and assisted by the acting of Messrs. Bensley, Aickin, Kemble, R. Palmer, and Bannister junior, Miss Farren, and Mrs. Bulkley, with an epilogue written for the heroine by Colman, it was played a few nights, but does not appear to have been very successful. On this subject Cumberland addressed the following letter to Colman :

"I have so long been the public aim of newspaper virulence, that they have familiarised a nature originally too sensitive, and cured me of my feelings by the force of corrosives. I read with indignation the pert malevolence of the papers against my friends, but in my own particular, I expect the lash, and have learned to bear it.

"I am glad to see that the Morning Chronicle has spoken so handsomely of the performers, and readily forgive the humiliating account he has published of the author's performance. But of this more than enough.

"Farewell, my dear Sir, and ever believe me,

Your most faithful friend and obliged servant,

R. CUMBERLAND."

To George Colman, Esq.

"Tuesday 10th July, 1787, T. Wells.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I return you my best thanks for your most kind letter, containing the account of the favourable reception given to my comedy. Whatever favour was bestowed upon it, must be derived from your friendly attention and judicious support of it, and to the correct and able representation which the performers gave to a piece which owed its merit to their exhibition. I beg you will present my warmest thanks and acknowledgments to them, assuring them of my sensibility on the occasion.

"As for your part, my dear Sir, from beginning to end, it has been such as leaves the most lively impressions on my heart towards you. I wish the production had been more deserving of you, but the zeal of its author will, in your estimation, make up all deficiencies in the work itself. Your generous feelings point to an object, which is truly the least in my thoughts, except for those purposes in which I am not interested and you are. If my efforts are acceptable, and if it is the least satisfaction to your mind, to be certified of the real attachment and esteem which I entertain in mine

for you, and all your undertakings, I rejoice on this occasion of expressing them to you.

" I am going to-morrow into Hampshire, and my direction is, at Mrs. Bludworth's, Holt, Winchester, where a line from you will be most pleasing to me. Thank you for your Epilogue, which I see with pleasure is highly commended in the public prints. I read my own condemnation in the same period, but I turn to your letter, and take comfort."

George Colman the younger, produced his excellent drama of ' Inkle and Yarico, during this season. He thus alludes to it:

" The wise old saws against precipitancy in taking a wife hold equally good, perhaps, in respect to the indeliberate choice of an occupation. Certain it is, that many a professed scribbler, grown threadbare and grey in his improvident calling, laments that he was ever wedded to the Nine, (polygamy, remember, is allowed in Parnassus,) and feels the force of those two admonitory maxims, ' Look before you Leap,' and ' Marry in Haste, to Repent at Leisure.' Hence it might be argued, that becoming either a husband or a poet, without due deliberation, may amount to much the same thing.

" But I did not very soon regret the rash step I had taken in abandoning the heavy studies of the law, for the lighter labours of the drama. Prosperity, and youthful spirits, protracted my honeymoon with the scenic Muses ; yet alas ! all honeymoons are fleeting in their nature, and are consequently doomed to wane.

" Besides the treat of Jekyll's good jokes, I had the benefit of his good advice, as far as it related to

the drama, exclusively; for he had the patience to hear me read, at intervals, scenes from two of my plays as I was proceeding in them, these plays were 'Inkle and Yarico;' and 'Ways and Means,' and I profited much by his criticism.

"It is pretty plain, from the above instance of my friend Jekyll's kindness, that I was writing for the theatre, when I should have been reading for the bar. In fact, I abandoned all appearance of forensic studies, after a very slight show of pursuing them; nor could much paternal anger be consistently expressed at this relinquishment of my calling for an idle trade, since 'my father did so before me.'

"The opera of 'Inkle and Yarico,' owes its origin to a page or two in the Spectator; in these, and other instances, where I adopted less limited though not extensive ground-works, I found, or fancied I found, that, however eligible the subjects which I borrowed, if the loans had been larger, I should have been duller.

"Critics have been pleased to observe, that it was a good hit when I made Inkle offer Yarico for sale to the person whom he afterwards discovers to be his intended father-in-law. The hit, good or bad, only occurred to me when I came to that part of the piece in which it is introduced, and arose from the accidental turn which I had given to previous scenes; as it is not in the original story, it would, in all probability, not have occurred to me while coldly preparing an elaborate prospectus; and such a prospectus once made, it is ten to one that I should have followed it mechanically.

"After the commencement of my course as an avowed author for the stage, the first check which my ardour experienced, was in the production of my fourth play, called 'Ways and Means,' which encountered some opposition, on the night of its probation;* this opposition was by no means what sailors would call a downright gale of wind, but the weather was squally, and not at all pleasant to a young navigator, who had performed three previous voyages, in perfectly untroubled waters; the little vessel, however, rode it out gallantly.

"The epilogue, written by myself, was taken in high dudgeon by the newspaper writers, whom it somewhat impoliticly ridiculed, and they joined common cause, by endeavouring to run down the piece, with much acrimony, in almost all their journals. Let the reader judge, from the following extract, what offence this same epilogue, which was spoken by Palmer, in the character of a newspaper critic, must have given to the gentlemen of the press:

"I am a critic, my masters! I sneer, splash, and vapour,
Puff parties, damn poets; in short, *do* a paper.
My name's Johnny Grub—I'm a vender of Scandal;
My pen, like an auctioner's hammer, I handle,
Knocking down reputations, by one inch of candle.†

* July 10, 1788. It was first written by him in four acts, and entitled 'More Ways than Means,' afterwards reduced to three acts, as played, and called 'Ways and Means.' The original in Colman's autograph, as first produced, with a copy as now altered, are among the manuscripts presented by Mrs. Colman to the Duke of Devonshire.

† This it is to be feared is incorrect. The old fashion of 'Sale by Candle,' probably precluded the use of the hammer; and the purchase of the lot, I believe, was decided by the going out of the candle, without the rap of the auctioneer.

I 've heard out the play, yet I need not have come?
I 'll tell you a secret, my masters, but mum!
Though ramm'd in amongst you, to praise or to mock it,
I brought my critique, cut and dry in my pocket:
We great paper editors—strange it appears!
Can often, believe me, dispense with our ears.
The author, like all other authors, well-knowing
That we are the people to set him a-going,
Has begg'd me, just now, in a flattering tone,
To publish a friendly critique, of his own:
Ev'ry good has its evil—we don't pay a souse,
Neither *we*, nor our friends, to come into the House;
But then, 'tis expected, because we are *free*,
We are bound to praise all the damn'd nonsense we see:
Hence comes it, the Houses, their emptiness scorning,
At low ebb at night, *overflow* in the morning!
Hence audiences, seated at ease, at the play,
Are squeezed to a mummy, poor devils, next day!
While self-praising authors write volumes on volumes,
And puffs every morning, like smoke—rise in columns."

" The lines then proceed to state that the author's own partial account of his play will be suppressed in the next day's newspaper, and that an abuse of it will be substituted under the appearance of great candour; and conclude with—

" If, therefore, in any one paper you see
An abuse of the play, whatsoever it be,
Wherever the poet shall find a hard rub,
That paper, depend on't, is done by John Grub!"

" As one slight instance of the influence which newspapers have over the minds of the very many people who 'don't take the trouble to think for themselves,' the following incident may be adduced. A few days after the first representation of 'Ways and Means,' the performance of which still continued, in spite of the Johnny Grubs, I strolled into Covent

Garden Market, where there was then another election; and there I met my old friend and brother dramatist, Reynolds: while we were walking arm in arm near the hustings, Reynolds was accosted by an acquaintance who was as unknown to me as I to him; he seemed of the dandy breed, and merely *en passant*, said, 'Reynolds, how do? great crowd here; your friend Colman has written a shocking bad play. How goes the poll? never saw the play, but it's monstrous bad; fine weather, very dull play; going out of town soon?'

"As a contrary instance, however, to show how 'time and the hour run through the roughest day,' and how a play can outlive the attacks of ephemeral censors, Ways and Means is, at this time occasionally acted in the London houses; is a stock piece, sometimes compressed into two acts, sometimes performed in its original three at most of the provincial theatres.

"A Review* of it in its printed form, says, 'This is a play of considerable merit, abounding in wit and well-drawn characters. The plot is simple, but clear, lively, and probable. The character of Sir David Dunder is well imagined, and naturally supported throughout. The dialogue is neat, and well suited to the respective dramatis personæ. The author tells us [in a preface] that in this piece laugh and whim were his objects; and the mirth and good humour of his audience, whatever malice and misrepresentation may affirm to the contrary, have convinced him that his design is accomplished.'

* Biographia Dramatica, edit. 1812, Vol. III., p. 393.

" I beg pardon for quoting the above *éloge* upon myself, but it is a link in my chain which I may be excused for not having omitted. Whether the trifle here in question had been lauded to the skies or hissed off the stage, can be now of no more importance to me than to my readers; and I care at this moment, as little about my Ways and Means, of 1788, as for the state of national finance in the reign of William the Conqueror; I should not, therefore, have mentioned the foregoing petty vexations had they not for the first time caused me to reflect a little, and very little did I then reflect, on the folly of having relinquished the study of an honourable profession, in which I had a fair chance of rising through industry and the connexions I possessed, that I might 'watch the wild vicissitudes of taste,' and make myself dependent upon an arbitrary and capricious body, composed of pit, box, and galleries, that *monstrum horrendum* whom I must thenceforward 'live to please,' that I might 'please to live.' "

The melancholy disorder of the elder Colman began in 1786, by an hemiplegia. In 1789, he was struck with paralysis (as the reader has been apprized in a preceding page) which nearly deprived him of the use of one side of his body, and in a short time afterwards he exhibited unquestionable proofs of mental derangement, thus furnishing a rather deplorable instance that the best intellects and finest talents have but a precarious tenure in our frail and feverish being. It was found necessary to place

Mr. Colman under proper care at Paddington, and the conduct of the theatre devolved upon his son.

On this melancholy occasion the concluding lines of his friend, Churchill's Epistle to Hogarth, naturally intrude themselves on our attention:

> " Sure 'tis a curse which angry fates impose,
> To mortify man's arrogance, that those
> Who 're fashioned of some better sort of clay,
> Much sooner than the common herd decay.
> With curious art the brain too finely wrought,
> Preys on herself, and is destroy'd by thought.
> Constant attention wears the active mind,
> Blots out her pow'rs, and leaves a blank behind."

The finances of the elder Colman moreover were not exempt from as devastating a revolution as that experienced in his person. The greatest affluence from considerable sources of wealth long poured into his coffers, without having ultimately enriched them; and without any waste imputable to known extravagance, it is probable that but for the unremitting exertions of his son, he would have experienced the ill-effects of as severe a reverse in his pecuniary matters as in his faculties. How the son succeeded as an author, the public judgment has sufficiently decided, and how that success enabled him to protect and support his afflicted father, 'in his utmost need,' is no mean eulogium on his principles as well as his talents, and will long be remembered to his advantage by all who hold filial goodness in estimation.

On George Colman, the younger, starting as manager, he records:

" People would be astonished if they were aware

of the cart-loads of trash which are annually offered to the director of a London theatre. The very first manuscript which was proposed to me for representation on my undertaking theatrical management, was from a nautical gentleman, on a nautical subject: the piece was of a tragic description, and in five acts; during the principal scenes of which the hero of the drama declaimed from the main-mast of a man-of-war, without once descending from his position.

" Miles Peter Andrews was one of the most persevering poetical pests.

" Andrews was in truth so wretched a writer, that his new plays in London, like his powder-mills at Dartford, were particularly hazardous affairs, and in great danger of going off with a sudden and violent explosion. One of the most successful efforts to which we find his name attached, is the comic opera called 'Summer Amusement,' brought out at the Haymarket theatre in 1792; but this piece he wrote conjointly with William Augustus Miles,* as inferior a dramatist as Andrews himself. Hence it would appear that a couple of weak authors, by clubbing their imbecilities may strengthen a play rather than render it doubly weak; in like manner two negatives, as we are told by grammarians, will make an affirmative.

" William Augustus Miles dabbled in politics more than in the drama. Having filled a subordinate situation in the Ordnance Office, from which he was dismissed, he published virulent pamphlets

* He wrote, be it acknowledged, several Prologues and Epilogues, very effective *ad captandum vulgus*.

against government, and particularly against that department which had ejected him. Many of these bilious effusions he subscribed so as to make his own name look like an assumed signature: sometimes it was printed backwards, Selim; sometimes forwards, but then it was tacked to such peculiar military subjects as caused it to be mistaken for the Roman dissyllable Mi-les, which few, if any, of my male readers need be told is Latin for a soldier.

"One day when my father and I were walking from Soho Square to the Haymarket, the two above-mentioned witlings were coming the contrary way, and on the opposite side of the street; they had each sent a new dramatic manuscript for acceptance to the summer theatre; and being anxious to get the start of each other in the production of their separate works, they both called out to my father, 'Remember Colman, I am first oars.' 'Humph,' muttered the manager, as they passed on, 'they may talk about first oars, but they have not a skull between them.'"

Miss George the celebrated singer, this season was desirous of returning to the Haymarket theatre. To an application from her for that purpose Colman returned the following reply:—

"Feb. 7, 1793, St. Alban's Street.

"I entreat you to believe, my dear Madam, that (were I permitted by circumstances) it would give me infinite satisfaction to accept the assistance you have so handsomely offered me. Added to the pleasure I should receive in seeing you again at the Haymarket, I should be happy in an opportunity of doing away any doubt upon your mind

of my being illiberal enough to be, in the smallest degree, influenced by any past misunderstandings.

"Your letter has, among other occurrences, brought them back to my recollection: but I recollect them without pique or animosity, and feel myself most cordially disposed to serve you. On considering my arrangements, however, (which for some time have been fully completed for next summer) I find the theatre almost overloaded with expense; and I could not, without injuring its interests, add to its present disbursements. If your inclination for the Haymarket should induce you to look forward to the summer after next, I shall think myself obliged to you if you give me timely notice: as you will then enable me to prove to you that I have not sent you empty professions. I am, my dear Madam, with the warmest wishes for your prosperity,

"Your sincere friend and servant,

To Miss George. G. COLMAN."

Messrs. Sheridan, Linley, and Ford, not having been able to complete their splendid edifice, of which Holland was the architect, in time for the usual commencement of the season, made arrangements with Colman the younger, to bring the Drury Lane Company to the Haymarket Theatre. This period was productive of a dreadful calamity. On the 3rd of February, 1794, their Majesties commanded the performances, and the crowd was so great at the pit entrance, that when the door was opened, a gentleman was thrown down the stairs, and the persons behind him being pushed forward, fell over him, and these again were trampled on by those impelled by the force of numbers who were still rushing on. The groans of the dying and the maimed were terrific, while those who were literally treading their

fellow-creatures to death, had not the power to recede. Fifteen persons were killed, and nineteen others were severely injured! This melancholy accident was not made known to the King, until his return to the palace. A royal command at the Haymarket Theatre did not again occur until 1803.

On the 14th of August, 1794, Mr. Colman the elder, died at Paddington, at the age of 62. His abilities as a dramatist were not more the subjects of praise, than his punctuality as a manager, and his liberal encouragement to other writers for the stage. From the lamentable condition into which he had sunk, both mentally and bodily, his death must have been considered a happy release. A few hours before he expired, he was seized with violent spasms, and these were succeeded by a melancholy stupor, in which he drew his last breath. Of his dramatic productions, which were numerous, we subjoin a list:

Polly Honeycomb, 1760; The Jealous Wife, 1761; The Musical Lady, 1762; Philaster (alteration), 1763; Deuce is in Him, 1763; Midsummer Night's Dream (altered), 1763; Fairy Tale, 1764; Clandestine Marriage, 1766; English Merchant, 1767; King Lear (alteration), 1768; Oxonian in Town, 1769; Man and Wife, 1769; The Portrait, 1770; The Fairy Prince, 1772; Comus, (altered), 1772; Achilles in Petticoats, (altered), 1774; Man of Business, 1774; Epicœne; or, the Silent Woman (altered), 1776; Spleen; or, Islington Spa, 1776; Occasional Prelude, 1776; New Brooms, 1776; Spanish Barber, 1777; Polly (alteration), 1777; The Sheep Shearing, 1777; The Female Chevalier, 1778; Bonduca (alteration), 1778; The Suicide, 1778; Separate Maintenance, 1779; Manager in Distress, 1780; The Genius of Nonsense, 1780; Harlequin Teague, 1782; Fatal Curiosity (alteration), 1783; The Election of Managers, 1784; Tit for Tat, 1788; Ut Pictura Poesis, 1789.

These dramas have considerable merit. In his

petite pieces the plots are simple, yet they contain strong character, and aim at ridiculing fashionable and prevailing follies. His comedies have the same merit with the others, as to the preservation of character. The estimation in which the entertainments exhibited under his direction were held by the public, the reputation which the Haymarket Theatre acquired, and the continual concourse of the fashionable world during the height of summer, sufficiently spoke the praises of Mr. Colman's management.

To sagacity in discovering the talent of his performers, he joined the inclination and ability to display them with every advantage. To him, Mr. Henderson, Miss Farren, Mr. Bannister, Miss George, Mrs. Wells, and Mr. Edwin, owed their introduction to a London audience.*

" Having purchased the Haymarket Theatre on the demise of my father," says George Colman the younger, " I continued to manage it as my own. During such progression, up to the year 1796,

* Among the many literary characters with whom Colman associated, was Dr. Farmer, who died at the lodge of Emanuel College, Cambridge, September 8, 1797. His will, dated about 1792, written on a blank leaf, torn out of an old book, simply stated—' I give to my brother, Joseph Farmer, all my property, not doubting of his using it for the benefit of our family;' but Steevens, with his wonted readiness for mischief, which he designated fun, published in The Oracle of September 21, under the signature of ' One of the Cock and Hen Club,' a ludicrous distribution of his supposed aquatic and other fowl at Cambridge. His screech-owl to Mrs. Mattocks; his old grey parrot, to Mrs. Cowley; his goldfinches, to Sir William Pulteney; his magpie, to George Colman, &c. The joke was posthumous, but it implied Steevens's sense of Colman's character.

inclusive, I scribbled many dramas for the Haymarket, and one for Drury Lane; in almost all of which the younger Bannister, being engaged at both theatres, performed a prominent character; so that for most of the thirteen years I have enumerated, he was of the greatest importance to my theatrical prosperity in my double capacity of author and manager; while I was of some service to him, by supplying him with new characters. These reciprocal interests made us, of course, such close colleagues, that our almost daily consultations promoted amity, while they forwarded business

"From this last-mentioned period, 1796, we were led by our speculations, one after the other, into different tracks. He had arrived at that height of London popularity when his visits to various provincial theatres, in the summer, were productive of much more money than my scale of expense in the Haymarket could afford to give him. As he wintered it, however, in Drury Lane, I profited, for two years more, by his acting in the pieces which I produced there. I then began to write for the rival house in Covent Garden, and this parted us as author and actor.* But separating as we did, through accident, and with the kindest sentiments for each other, it was not likely that we should forget, or neglect, further to cultivate our mutual regard. That regard is now so mellowed by time, that it will never cease till time himself, who in ripening our

* He came back to me, at the Haymarket, for one summer season, in 1804.

friendship, has been all the while whetting his scythe for the friends, shall have mowed down the men, and gathered in his harvest."

Old Tate Wilkinson, the York manager, visiting London at this period, thus describes the new Drury Lane Theatre: "The conveniences, staircases, and true elegance of that house cannot be questioned; but with all the elegancies before the curtain, I could not perceive the stage department, as to green-rooms, dressing-rooms, &c. were nearly so convenient, or even so comfortable as those of the old Drury Lane; and though in honour of the stage, and my true wishes for the prosperity of my chosen brethren of the sock and buskin, I could not refrain a prophesying sigh, that all this elegant mending might be too heavy for the backs of the present ingenious and spirited proprietors; but if not, I cannot think but less theatres might have answered the purpose much better for the community of the gentlemen and ladies of the stage. Take the company of each theatre in a general view, and I fear that many of them, by the very unavoidable charges of a benefit night, must ever run the hazard of being a loser."

This was the opinion of one old stager, who had formerly been a London actor, and we insert it as a prelude to the ideas of the Colmans on the size of theatres.

"My father wrote the preface to his translation of Terence's comedies long before he thought of being Proprietor of the Haymarket Theatre; he could not therefore at that time have given an *ex parte*

opinion, when he says in that preface, speaking of the 'moderns,' that, 'by contracting the dimensions of their theatres, although they have a good deal abated the magnificence of Spectacle, they have been able to approach much nearer to the truth and simplicity of representation.'

"It is curious to observe how, after a certain time, the moderns of Drury Lane and Covent Garden reverted all at once to this magnificence of the ancients of Greece and Rome; for immediately after my father's demise, I opened the Haymarket Theatre in 1795, with an occasional piece,* which contains a ridicule, a good-natured one I hope, on the extended dimensions of the two principal London Play-houses, wherein I say, in a song alluding to them:

> "When people appear
> Quite unable to hear,
> 'Tis undoubtedly needless to talk;"

and that,

> "'Twere better they began
> On the new invented plan,
> And with Telegraphs transmitted us the plot:"

"The new Large Houses soon found the necessity of recurring to that 'magnificence of spectacle' of which my father speaks; they introduced White Oxen, Horses, Elephants, both sham and real; and the song above quoted ends with the following verse:

* 'New Hay at the Old Market;' the first scene of which is still acted under the title of 'Sylvester Daggerwood.'

" But our House here 's so small
That we 've no need to bawl,
And the summer will rapidly pass,
So we hope you 'll think fit
To hear the Actors a bit,
Till the Elephants and Bulls come from grass:
Then let Shakspeare and Jonson go hang, go hang!
Let your Otways and Drydens go drown!
Give them but Elephants and White bulls enough,
And they 'll take in all the town,
Brave boys!"

" No doubt, the vastness of the two Theatres above mentioned must disappoint many who go thither for all that complete gratification arising from the intellectual repast which the whole round of our drama professes to give.

" There are no certain rules of architecture for the conveyance of sound; but an actor, by pitching his voice according to its various powers of modulation, may do much to counteract the impediments in a building; the drawback, therefore, upon his inflections of tone appears to be a good deal less than the deductions from his countenance. To produce in very large theatres the desired and instantaneous effects of the voice, more is requisite, though much may be gained by practice than there ought to be; but to send post-haste intelligence in a smile, to forward despatches by a glance, to print, as it were, a Gazette in the face, that it may reach eager politicians, so far distant from the spot whence information must be transmitted, is a much more arduous undertaking. Still, even this difficulty may, it is presumed, be in some measure surmounted; for, since the adoption of the present scale of the prin-

cipal theatres, there have been and are performers, both tragic and comic, whose sudden turns of countenance have commanded general applause; but whether such effects may not often be produced by daubing, by exaggeration, and distortions of the visage, like scenes painted in distemper, is a question.

" Garrick, always tremblingly alive to his great celebrity, and judicious in nursing his fame, would not probably have risked his powers in theatres of the present magnitude, particularly in the sublimer walk of tragedy. His talents must have suffered a paralysis, a loss of half their vitality, when the rapid and astonishing transitions of his eye and his features could not instantly, by their close fidelity to nature, electrify all who witnessed them.

" On the whole, if a sweeping decision can be formed from these loose remarks, it may be said, that the principal London theatres are too large for all the purposes they should accomplish; too large for the perfect convenience of vision, and for an easy modulation of speech; too large to

' Hold the mirror up to nature,'

so as to give a full and just reflection of her delicate features and proportions; and theatrical proprietors seem to be of this opinion, by giving of late more into spectacle, melo-drama, and opera, which may be better seen and heard at a distance, than those representations which have been quaintly termed the Legitimate Drama. The proprietors may possibly plead, that there is a dearth of legitimate dramatists,

and it may be so; it has been averred to be the case in all ages; but few regular shoemakers are inclined to take the trouble of making shoes, when they find so much encouragement given to them for cobbling. Between managers and the town, who leads or who drives is a problem of difficult solution; do they not by turns lead and drive each other?"

CHAPTER VIII.

1796.

Blue Beard—Feudal Times—The Forty Thieves—O'Keefe's first introduction to Colman, 1777—His pleasant comic dramas —Colman in Dublin, 1779—The Iron Chest produced—The celebrated Preface by Colman the younger—Rehearsals of the play—John Kemble—Dodd—Sir Edward Mortimer—Opium —Apology—Walking over the course—Severe animadversions—Caleb Williams—Godwin—Determination not to confound the two Georges—Kiddy Davies—Caufield's imitation —Lengthy letter of old Macklin to the elder Colman (a curiosity).

COLMAN, the reader will have noticed in the preceding chapter, apologises for cobbling. In the large new theatre of Drury Lane, in the fulness of his dramatic vigour, he produced three spectacles, all good in their way; *viz.* 'Blue Beard,' 'Feudal Times,' and 'The Forty Thieves.' The second piece, we will not say drama, was the least effective; and the poetry, in the burthen of one of the chorusses of a song sung by Bannister, was rather in the Edwin-O'Keefe manner.

> "Bless our noble Master,
> Keep him from disaster;
> Twang dillo, dillo, dillo dee!"

Dear, kind-hearted, merry O'Keefe, to abstain from mentioning his name, as having been so fre-

quently employed by both the Colmans, and of such eminent service to the little Haymarket theatre, would be indeed an unjust omission; but alas! for the fate of a comic author, what do the public care for the man who has sent tens of thousands home to their beds laughing, year after year—who has toiled incessantly for their gratification; his contemporaries, the nightly admirers of his effusions, have followed the creator of mirth and whim to his last home, and a succeeding generation of playgoers barely know his name!

O'Keefe's first acquaintance with the elder Colman, according to the 'Recollections' of the former, is thus narrated:—"Coming with my family to London, the Christmas of 1777, and fearing the mortifications that an author must of course feel on his compositions being rejected by managers, I sent my play to George Colman, Esq., senior, patentee of the Theatre Royal Haymarket, with a letter, requesting that, should he disapprove of it, he would have it left at the bar of the Grecian Coffee-house, directed to A. B.; and if he liked it well enough to promise he would bring it out, that he would send an answer as above; and the author, on his mentioning a time, would wait upon him. The next day I called at the Coffee-house, where I found a jocular, yet polite, and indeed friendly letter from Mr. Colman, directed to A. B., with his approbation of the piece; a promise to bring it out the following summer, and his wish to see the author at Soho Square the next day at eleven o'clock, a joyful letter to me, as, previous to

my sending my play * to Mr. Colman, I showed it to my early friend William Lewis, who told me it was not worth two-pence.

" The next morning I was punctual to appointment, and posted to Soho Square, where, at the left-hand corner of Bateman's Buildings, I knocked at the door of a fine looking house, and was ushered into the library. Seated in cap and gown at breakfast, I there, for the first time, saw the manager of the Haymarket Theatre, author of The English Merchant, The Jealous Wife, &c. who received me with all the frank good nature of his character, laughed heartily at the whim of the piece, and repeated the promise of bringing it out on his boards. I then ventured to disclose my name."

The piece was produced, and was successful. O'Keefe's next drama written for Colman was 'The Son-in-Law,' which appeared in 1779; the music was composed by Dr. Arnold.

In the winter of that year, Colman the elder went over to Dublin, invited by Mr. Jefferies, brother-in-law to Lord Fitzgibbon, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and other leading persons of rank, to establish a theatre in that city; but from Colman's own survey of the little likelihood of success in such a speculation he became alarmed, and gave up his part in the affair. O'Keefe then wrote 'The Dead Alive,' which Colman produced in 1781; 'The Agreeable Surprise' in the same season, also came from his fertile and merry pen. Edwin at this period was the low

* Be it remembered, this play, as O'Keefe terms it, was the broad farce, called 'Tony Lumpkin in Town.'

comedian, and enjoyed the greatest popularity with the public. Colman, seeing the advantages he derived from so eccentric and ready a writer as O'Keefe, gave him constant invitations to Soho Square, and to Richmond. When Colman published his translation of Terence, the motto he prefixed was the first line of Pedrillo's song, in The Castle of Andalusia,

"A master I have, and I am his man."

A few days after the failure of O'Keefe's opera 'The Banditti,'* at Covent Garden Theatre, the author was at Colman's house, with Doctor Arnold and others, when the Doctor remarked, that the Opera had been cut too much. Colman said, "Ah! but who was the cutter?" and looking at O'Keefe with a chuckle, added, "Not the Cutter of Coleman Street."†

In 1783, O'Keefe wrote 'The Young Quaker,' which Colman produced with considerable success. 'Peeping Tom,' was his next farce. Edwin as the Tailor was admirable, yet Colman declared to O'Keefe, that he had wrought the humour so high, that even Edwin, with all his tiptoe stretch, was unable to reach it. 'The Beggar on Horseback' was written by O'Keefe for the Haymarket the next season. The following letter from Colman at Bath to O'Keefe shows the intimacy which subsisted between them.

"My Dear O'Keefe, Bath, March 21, 1786.

"I am sorry that the continuation of your son's illness stops your journey, and wish he could have come with you

* Afterwards produced as 'The Castle of Andalusia!'

† The title of one of Cowley's plays.

as a new Bath Guide. Go on with your piece at least, and be assured, that there is no idea of any change in the present administration. Report is a lying gossip, for I am told she has lately given me a second stroke, though I have been, ever since my arrival to the present moment, in a state of gradual but effective recovery. I have this day began to bathe; and if the bath answers as well as the pump has answered, I shall ascend the throne without stumbling or tottering, and wield the sceptre with a hand as firm and steady as at any period of my turbulent reign. Poor Harris, I hear from good authority, has been very ill indeed, but has for some time been pronounced out of danger. I am not sorry you will summer it at Barnes, as you will, I hope, often visit your neighbour at Richmond, who will run there as often as possible, and from whom you will always find a hearty welcome. With good wishes to you and your brother, I remain, Dear O'Keefe,

Your's most truly,

G. COLMAN."

The following opinion of the Colmans, by O'Keefe, ought, perhaps, to find a place here.

"And here I am happy to acknowledge and amply declare, that through the whole progress of the younger Colman's dramatic transactions with me, he proved himself, as his father whimsically called him, in his prologue to young George's first piece, 'Two to One,' 'a true chip of the old block;' for friendship is often hereditary, and this George the second of the theatrical sceptre has always been to me most kind and liberal."

O'Keefe's pieces were the staple commodity at the Haymarket. He fitted Edwin and Parsons accurately with whimsical characters. His dramas originally produced in the little theatre, were 'Tony Lumpkin

in Town,' 'The Son in Law,' 'The Agreeable Surprise,' 'The Young Quaker,' 'The Dead Alive,' 'Peeping Tom,' 'The Birth Day; or, the Prince of Arragon,' 'The Beggar on Horseback,' 'The Prisoner at Large,' 'The Basket Maker,' and 'The Magic Banner.' The rest were brought out by Mr. Harris, at Covent Garden, with one exception, which was a comedy, written late in life, and condemned at Drury Lane Theatre, in which there was a principal character written for Mrs. Jordan.

This year, 1796, was remarkable in the life of Colman, for the production and failure of his play entitled 'The Iron Chest,' at Drury Lane Theatre. Its non-success was attributed by the author to Mr. Kemble, the original representative of Sir Edward Mortimer. Colman was so sore on this subject at the period, that he commemorated his bitterness in a preface prefixed to the play, written with a pen which assimilated in its texture to the iron instrument presented by the devil to Father Ambrosio, in Monk Lewis's romance. This caustic record has been partially suppressed; both author and actor having relinquished a mutual animosity, which in its character and conduct could reflect but little credit on either. It has nevertheless been deemed right not to omit the offensive preface in the present work; but it must be remembered that it was written under the impulse of feelings rendered poignantly acute by the loss of the unprecedented sum which had been agreed to be paid to Colman, had the play proved successful, and therefore must be received with caution. That Mr. Kemble's behaviour throughout the business, was not such as to exculpate him

entirely from the charges urged against him, must be admitted, but that he was so grossly culpable as Mr. Colman endeavours to prove, may be unequivocally denied.

COLMAN'S PREFACE TO THE IRON CHEST.

"Having been for some time a labourer in the drama, and finding it necessary to continue my labours, I cannot help endeavouring to guard the past from misrepresentation, lest my supineness may injure the future. Conscious that a prejudice has been created against the play, which I now submit to the reader, and conscious how far I am innocent of raising it, it were stupid to sit down in silence, and thus tacitly acknowledge myself guilty of dulness, humbly confess I have been deficient in the knowledge of my trade, damn myself for a bungling workman, and fix a disrepute upon every article which may hereafter come from my hands.

"Thanks to you, ladies and gentlemen! you have been kind customers to me; and I am proud to say that you have stamped a fashion on my goods. Base, indeed, and ungrateful were the attempt, after your favours, so long received and continued, to impose upon you a clumsy commodity, and boast it to be ware of the best quality that I ever put up to sale! No, on the word of an honest man, I have bestowed no small pains on this 'Iron Chest,' which I offer you. Inspect it: examine it. You see the maker's name is upon it. I do not say it is perfect. I do not pretend to tell you that it is of the highest polish; there is no occasion for that; many of my brethren have presented you with *mere*

linings for chests, and you have been content; but I trust that you will find my 'Iron Chest' will hold together, that it is tolerably sound, and fit for all the purposes for which it was intended; then how came it to fall in pieces after four days wear? I will explain that; but alas! alas! my heart doth yearn when I think on the task which circumstance has thrust upon me.

"Now, by the spirit of Peace I swear! were I not still doomed to explore the rugged windings of the drama, I would wrap myself in mute philosophy, and repose calmly under the dark shade of my grievance, rather than endure the pain of this explanation. I cannot, however, cry, 'let the world slide;' I must pursue my journey, and be active to clear away the obstacles that impede my progress.

"I am too callous now to be annoyed by those innumerable gnats and insects who daily dart their impotent stings on the literary traveller, and too knowing to dismount and waste my time in whipping grasshoppers; but here is a scowling, sullen, black bull, right athwart my road; a monster of magnitude of the Bœotian breed, perplexing me in my wanderings through the entangled labyrinth of Drury.

"He stands sulkily before me, with sides seemingly impenetrable to any lash, and tougher than the dun cow of Warwick! His front outfronting the brazen bull of Perillus! He has bellowed, gentlemen, yea, he hath bellowed a dismal sound! a hollow unvaried tone, heaved from his very midriff, and striking the listener with torpor! Would I could pass the animal quietly for my own sake, and for

his, by Jupiter! I repeat it, I would not willingly harm the bull. I delight not in baiting him. I would jog as gently by him as by the ass that grazes on the common; but he has obstinately blocked up my way; he has already tossed and gored me severely. I must make an effort, or he batters me down, and leaves me to bite the dust.

"The weapon I must use is not of that brilliant and keen quality, which, in a skilful hand, neatly cuts up the subject, to the delight and admiration of the bystanders; it is a homely cudgel of narrative; a blunt batoon of matter of fact; affording little display of art in the wielder, and so heavy in its nature, that it can merely claim the merit of being appropriate to the opponent at whom it is levelled. Pray stand clear! for I shall handle this club vilely, and if any one come in my way, he may chance to get a rap which I did not intend to bestow on him. Good, venal, and venemous gentlemen, who dabble in ink for pay or from pique, and who have dubbed yourselves critics, keep your distance now! Run home to your garrets! Tools! ye are but *ephemera* at best, and will die soon enough in the paltry course of your insignificant natures, without thrusting your ears (if there be any left you) into the heat of this perilous action. Avaunt!

"Well, well, stay if ye are bent upon it, and be pert and busy. Your folly to me is of no moment,* I hasten to my narrative. I agreed to write the

* Ye who impartially and conscientiously sit in diurnal judgment upon modern dramatists, apply not this to yourselves. It aims only at the malevolent, the mean, and the ignorant, who are the disgrace of your order.

following play at the instance of the chief proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre, who unconditionally agreed to pay me a certain sum for my labour; and this certain sum being much larger than any, I believe, offered on similar occasions, created no small jealousy among the Parnassian *sans culottes*, several of whom have of late been rapidly industrious to level, to the muddy surface of their Castilian ditch, so *aristocratico dramatic* a bargainer.

"The play, as fast as written (piece meal) was put into rehearsal: but let it here be noted, gentle reader, that a rehearsal in Drury Lane (I mean as far as relates to this Iron Chest) is *lucus a* NON *lucendo*. They y'clept it a rehearsal, I conjecture: *but they did* NOT *rehearse*. I call the loved shade of Garrick to witness; nay, I call the less loved presence of the *then* acting manager to avow, that there never was one fair rehearsal of the play—never one rehearsal, wherein one, two, or more of the performers, very essential to the piece, were not absent; and all the rehearsals which I attended, so slovenly and irregular, that the ragged master of a theatrical barn might have blushed for the want of discipline in the pompous director of His Majesty's servants, and at the vast and astonishing new-erected Theatre Royal Drury Lane. It is well known, to those conversant with the business of the stage, that no perfect judgment can be formed of the length of a play, apparent to the spectator, nor of the general effect intended to be produced, until the private repetitions among the actors, have reduced the business into something like *lucidus ordo:* then comes the time for the judicious author to take up

his pruning-knife, or handle his hatchet. Then he goes lustily to work, my masters, upon his curtailments or additions; his transpositions, his loppings, his parings, trimmings, and dockings, &c. &c.

"As in the writing so in the rehearsal—

> "Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor;
> Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici
> Pleraque differat, et præsans in tempus omittat:
> Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor."

"But, woe is me! while I was patiently waiting the expected crisis, a circumstance occurred which compelled me to watch a crisis of a less agreeable nature. A fever attacked me, as I sat beneath the damp dome of Drury, and drove me *malgré moi*, to bed; where I lay during a week, till three hours before the play was exhibited. In addition to the unavoidable injury arising from the author's absence, Mr. Kemble, the acting-manager, and principal performer in the piece, was, and had been for a few days previous to my own illness, confined to his chamber by indisposition. I lay little stress, indeed, upon his temporary incapacity to perform his managerial duty; his mode of discharging it, hitherto, was productive of little benefit to me; still it was some drawback—for were a mere log thrown amidst a Thespian community, and nominated its dull and ponderous ruler, still the block, while in its place, would carry some sway with it. But his non-attendance as an actor so much engaged in the play, was particularly detrimental.

"Nay, even the composer of the music—and here let me breathe a sigh to the memory of departed

worth and genius, as I write the name of Storace—even he could not preside in his department. He was preparing an early flight to that abode of harmony, where choirs of angels swell the note of welcome to an honest and congenial spirit.

" Here, then, was a direct stop to the business? No such thing, the troops proceeded without leaders; in the dark, Messieurs! ' *sans* eyes, *sans* everything.' The prompter, it is true, a kind of non-commissioned officer, headed the corps, and a curious march was made of it.

" But, lo! two days, or three, I forget which, previous to the public representation, up rose King Kemble, like Somnus from his ebon bed, to distribute his dosing directions among his subjects:

> " Tarda gravitate jacentes
> Vix oculus tollens;
> Summaque pertuticus mutanti pectora mento,
> Excussit, tandem, sibi se; cubitoque levatus," &c.

" He came, saw, and pronounced the piece to be ripe for exhibition. It was ordered to be performed immediately. News was brought to me, in my sickness, of the mighty fiat; and although I was told, officially, that due care had been taken to render it worthy of public attention, I submitted with doubt and trembling to the decree. My doubts, too, of this boasted care were not a little increased by a note, which I received from the prompter, written by the manager's orders, *three hours only* before the first representation of the play: wherein, at this late period, my consent was abruptly requested to a transposition of two of the most material scenes in

the second act; and the reason given for this curious proposal was, that the present stage of Drury—where the architect and machinist, with the judgment and ingenuity of a politician and a wit to assist them, had combined to outdo all former theatrical outdoings—was so bunglingly constructed, that there was not time for the carpenters to place the lumbering frame-work, on which an abbey was painted, behind the representation of a library, without leaving a chasm of ten minutes in the action of the play, and that in the middle of an act. Such was the fabrication of a stage whose extent and powers have been so vauntingly advertised, under the classic management of Mr. Kemble, in the edifying exhibition of pantomimes, processions, pageants, triumphal cars, milk-white horses, and elephants.

"As I did not choose to alter the construction of my play, without deliberation, merely to screen the ill-construction of the house, I would not listen to this modest and well-timed demand of turning the progress of my fable topsy-turvey.

"Very ill, and very weak from the effects of the fever, which had not yet left me, I made an effort, and went to the theatre to witness the performance. I found Mr. Kemble in his dressing-room, a short time before the curtain was drawn up, taking *opium pills;* and nobody who is acquainted with that gentleman will doubt me when I assert, that they are medicine which he has long been in the habit of swallowing.

"He appeared to me very unwell, and seemed, indeed, to have imbibed

'Poppy and mandragora,
And all the drowsy syrups of the world.'

The play began, and all went smoothly, till a trifling disapprobation was shown to the character personated by Mr. Dodd, the scene in which he was engaged, being much too long—a proof of the neglect of those whose business it was to have informed me (in my unavoidable absence from the theatre) that it appeared in the last rehearsals to want curtailment.

"I considered this, however, to be of no great moment; for Mr. Kemble was to appear immediately in a subsequent scene, and much was expected from his execution of a part written expressly for his powers.

"And here let me describe the requisites for the character which I have attempted to draw, that the world may judge whether I have taken a wrong measure of the personage I proposed to fit; premising that I have worked for him before with success, and therefore it may be presumed that I am somewhat acquainted with the dimensions of his qualifications.

"I required, then, a man—

'Of a tall stature, and of sable hue,
Much like the Son of Kish, that lofty Jew.'

"A man of whom it might be said:

'There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits and broods.'

Look at the actor—and will any body do him the injustice to declare that he is deficient in these qua-

lifications. It would puzzle any author, in any time or country, from Æschylus down, even to the translator of Lodoiska, and really, gentlemen, I can go no lower, to find a figure and face better suited to the purpose. I have endeavoured, moreover, to pourtray Sir Edward Mortimer as a man stately in his deportment, reserved in his temper, mysterious, cold, and impenetrable in his manner; and the candid observers, I trust, will allow that Mr. Kemble is thoroughly adequate to such a personation.

"To complete my requisitions, I demanded a performer who could enter into the spirit of a character proceeding upon romantic, half-witted principles, abstracted in his opinions, sophisticated in his reasonings, and who is thrown into situations where his mind and conduct stand tiptoe, on the extremest verge of probability. Here, surely I have not mistaken my man; for, if I am able to form any opinion of him as an actor, and my opinion, I know, is far from singular, his chief excellence almost approaches that style which the learned denominate caricature.

"Possibility on the stretch, passion over-leaping its customary bound, movements of the souls, sullen or violent, very rarely seen in the common course of things, yet still may be seen—in these is his element.

"As our language is said to have sunk under the vast conception of Milton, so does the modesty of nature suffer a depression beneath the unwieldy imaginings of Mr. Kemble. He seldom deigns to accompany the goddess in her ordinary walks, when

she decently paces the regular path with a sober step, and a straight person; but he kindly assists her when she is, doubtless in need of assistance, when she appears out of her way, crazy and crooked.

"The arrogant fault of being more refined than refinement, more proper than propriety, more sensible than sense, which nine times in ten, will disgust the spectators, becomes frequently an advantage to him in characters of the above description.

"In short, Mr. Kemble is a paragon representative of the *lusus naturæ;* and were Mr. Kemble sewed up in a skin, to act a hog in a pantomime, he would act a hog with six legs better than a hog with four.

"If any one ask why I chose to sketch a *lusus naturæ*, when it might better become an author to be chaste in his delineation, I can only reply, that I did so to obtain the assistance of Mr. Kemble in his best manner; and that now, I do most heartily repent me; for never, sure, did man place the main strength of his building on so rotten a prop.

"Well, the great actor was discovered as Sir Edward Mortimer in his library. Gloom and desolation sat upon his brow; and he was habited, from the wig to the shoe-string, with the most studied exactness. Had one of King Charles the First's portraits walked from its frame upon the boards of the theatre, it could not have afforded a truer representation of ancient and melancholy dignity. The picture could not have looked better; but in justice to the picture, it must also be added, that the picture could scarcely have acted worse.

"The spectators, who gaped with expectation at his first appearance, yawned with lassitude before his first exit. It seemed, however, that illness had totally incapacitated him from performing the business he had undertaken. For his mere illness he was entitled to pity, for his conduct under it, he undoubtedly deserved censure.

"How can Mr. Kemble, as a manager and an actor, justify his thrusting himself forward in a new play, the material interest of which rested on his own powers, at a moment when he must be conscious that he had no powers at all? Mr. Kemble owes a duty to the public, to his employer, and to an author writing for his employer's house. How does he treat the claimants upon his service in this instance? Exactly thus; he insults the understanding of the first, and injures the interest of the two last, by calling in a crowd to an entertainment which he knows he must mar.

"I requested him, at the end of the first act, to order an apology to be made for his indisposition, lest the uninformed or malicious might attribute the ponderosity of the performer to the heaviness of the author. I was anxious to disavow all right and title to those pigs of lead which did not belong to me, and of which Mr. Kemble was the just proprietor. But no: he peremptorily declared he would not suffer an apology to be made: it should have been made (if at all) before the play begun. Then why was it not made? He did not *then* imagine that illness would have disabled him. So, then, a man quits his chamber, after an attack which has evidently

weakened him extremely, and he has no bodily feel, no internal monitor, to whisper to him that he is feeble, and that he has not recovered sufficient strength to make a violent exertion! This mode of reasoning adopted by Mr. Kemble, is much in the spirit of the clown who did not know whether he could play on a fiddle till he tried. Be it noted also, that Mr. Kemble was swallowing his opium pills *before* the play began *because he was ill;* but opium causes strange oblivious effects: and these pills must have occasioned so sudden a lapse in Mr. Kemble's memory, that he forgot when he took them, why he took them, or that he had taken them at all. This dose must have been very powerful. Still, for the reasons already stated, I pressed for an apology; still Mr. Kemble continued obstinate in opposing it. His indisposition, he said, was evident; he had coughed very much upon the stage, and an apology would make him 'look like a fool.'

"Good nature, in excess, becomes weakness: but I never yet found, in the course of my reading, that good nature and folly would bear the same definition; Mr. Kemble, it should seem, and he produced managerical authority for it, considered the terms to be synonimous. Freely, however, forgiving him his unkindness, in refusing to gratify a poor devil of an author, who, very anxious for his reputation, was very moderate in his request, I do, in all Christian charity, most sincerely wish that Mr. Kemble may never find greater cause 'to look like a fool,' than an apology for his indisposition.

"At length, by dint of perseverance, I gained my

point. A proprietor of the theatre was called in upon the occasion,* whose mediation in my favour carried more weight with the acting manager than a hapless dramatist's entreaty, and the apology was, in due form, delivered to the audience.

" One-third of the play only was yet performed; and I was now to make up my mind, like an unfortunate traveller, to pursue my painful journey through two stages more, upon a broken down poster, on whose back lay all the baggage for my expedition. Miserably and most heavily in hand did the poster proceed! he groaned, he lagged, he coughed, he winced, he wheezed! Never was seen so sorry a jade! The audience grew completely soured, and once completely soured, everything naturally went wrong. They recurred to their disapprobation of poor Dodd, and observe what this produced: I must relate it.

" Mr. Kemble had just plodded through a scene, regardless of those loud and manifest tokens that the critics delighted not in the ' drowsy hums' with which he ' rang night's yawning peal,' when Dodd appeared to him on the stage, at whose entrance the clamour was renewed. Then, and *not till then*, did the acting manager, who had been deaf as any post to the supplications of the author for an apology, then did he appear suddenly seized with a fit of good nature. He voluntarily came forward ' to look like a fool,' and beg the indulgence of the town. He feared he was the unhappy cause of their disapprobation; he entreated their patience, and hoped

* Mr. Richardson.—Ed.

he should shortly gain strength to enable them to judge, on a future night, what he handsomely termed the merits of the play. Here was friendship! Here was adroitness! While the public were testifying their disgust at the piece, through the medium of poor Dodd,* Mr. Kemble, with unexampled generosity, took the whole blame on his own shoulders, and heroically saved the author, by so timely an interposition. I was charmed with this master-stroke, and at the impulse of the moment I thanked him. But alas! how narrow is the soul of man! how distrustful in its movements, how scanty in its acknowledgments, how perplexing to itself in its combinations! Had I afterwards looked on the thing simply and nakedly by itself, why, the thing is a good-natured thing; but I must be putting other circumstances by the side of it, with a plague to me! I must be puzzling myself to see if all fits, if all is of a piece, and what is the result? Miserable that I am! I have lost the pleasure of evincing a gratitude, which I thought I owed, because I no longer feel myself a debtor. Had I abandoned my mind to that placid negligence, that luxurious confidence which the inconsiderate enjoy, it had never occurred to me that Mr. Kemble, foreseeing, perhaps, that an aggrieved author might not be totally silent, stepped forward with this speech to the public, as a kind of *salvo*, should a statement be made, for his rigidity in the first instance. It had never occurred to me that Mr. Kemble was sufficiently hissed, yawned at, laughed at, and coughed down, to

* Dodd was the original representative of Adam Winterton.

have made his apology *before* Mr. Dodd appeared; it had never occurred to me, that his making his apology at a previous moment would have answered the same purpose to *me*, and not to *him*. It never occurred, in short, that there is such a thing as ostentatious humility, and a politic act of kindness; and that I should have waited the sequel of a man's conduct, before I thanked him for one instance of seeming good-will, close upon the heels of stubborn ill-nature, and in the midst of existing and palpable injury. The sequel will show that I was premature in my acknowledgment; but before I come to the sequel a word or two (I will be brief) to close my account of this, the first night's eventful history. The piece was concluded, and *given out* for a second performance with much opposition.

"Friends, who never heard the play read, shook their heads; friends who *had* heard it read, scarcely knew it again; several, I doubt not, of the impartial, who chose to be active, actively condemned; and enemies of course rejoiced in an opportunity of joining them. No opportunity could be fairer. The play was at least a full hour too long; and had Job himself sat to hear it, he must have lost his patience. But, if, gentle reader, thou possessed Job's quality, and hast followed me thus far in my narrative, it will appear to thee, for I doubt not thy retention and combination, that I was unable to curtail it effectually, at the proper time, the last rehearsal. I was then laid flat, my dear friends, as you remember I told you, by a fever. The acting manager *did* attend the last rehearsal, and suffered the piece to

be produced *uncut*, 'to drag its slow length along,' surcharged with all his own incapacity, and all his opium.

"How then do I stand indebted, according to the articles of this night's statement? I owe to Mr. Kemble

"For his illness	Compassion.
"For his conduct under it	Censure.
"For his refusing to make an apology .	A smile!
"For his making an apology	A sneer.
"For his mismanagement	A groan.
"For his acting	A hiss.

"This account is somewhat like the tavern-bill picked from Falstaff's pocket, when he is snoring behind the arras. There is but one halfpenny-worth of compassion to this intolerable deal of blame.

"Now for the sequel. I have shewn, I think, that Mr. Kemble, in the first instance, undertook a duty which he *could* not perform. I have now to affirm, with all the difficulty of proving a negative full in my face, that he afterwards made a mockery of discharging a duty which he *would* not perform.

"After a week's interval, to give him time to recruit his strength, and the author time to curtail and alter the play, for the impression which the mismanager and actor had contrived to stamp, rendered alteration necessary, it was a second time represented.

"I must here let the uninformed reader into a secret; but I must go to Newmarket to make him understand me. No, Epsom will do as well, and that is nearer home. It often happens at a race, that a known horse, from whom good sport is ex-

pected, disappoints the crowd by *walking over his course.* He does not miss an inch of the ground; but affords not one jot of diversion, unless some pleasure is received in contemplating his figure. Now an actor can do the very same thing. He can *walk over his part;* he can miss no more of his words than the horse does of his way; he can be as dull and as tedious, and as good-looking as the horse in his progress, the only difference between the two animals is, that the horse brings in him who bets upon him a gainer; but the luckless wight who has a large stake depending upon the actor, is, decidedly certain to lose. There is a trick too, that the jockies practise, which is called, I think, *playing booty.* This consists in appearing to use their utmost endeavour to reach the winning post first, when they are already determined to come in the last.

" The consequence is, that all, except the knowing ones, attribute no fault to the jockey, but damn the horse for a sluggard. An actor can *play booty* if he chooses: he can pretend to whip and spur, and do his best, when the connoisseur knows, all the while, he is shirking; but sluggard is the unmerited appellation given by the majority to the innocent author.

" Mr. Kemble chiefly chose to be the horse, and *walked over the ground.* Every now and then (but scarcely enough to save appearances) he gave a slight touch of the jockey, and *played booty.* Whether the language which is put into the mouth of Sir Edward Mortimer be above mediocrity, or below contempt, is not the present purpose; but

the words he is made to utter certainly convey a meaning; and the circumstances of the scenes afford an opportunity to the performer of playing off his mimic emotions, his transitions of passion, his starts, and all the trickeries of his trade.

"The devil a trick did Mr. Kemble play but a scurvy one! His emotions and passions were so rare, and so feeble, that they seasoned his general insipidity, like a single grain of wretched pepper thrown into the largest dose of water-gruel that ever was administered to an invalid. For the most part he toiled on, line after line, in a dull current of undiversified sound, which stole upon the ear far more drowsily than the distant murmurings of Lethe, with no attempt to break the lulling stream, or check its sleep-inviting course.

"Frogs in a marsh, flies in a bottle, wind in a crevice, a preacher in a field, the drone of a bagpipe, all, all yielded to the inimitable and soporific monotony of Mr. Kemble!

"The very best dramatic writing, where passion is expressed, if delivered languidly by the actor, will fail in its intended effect; and I will be bold enough to say, that were the *curse in King Lear* new to an audience, and they heard it uttered, for the first time, in a croak, fainter than a crow's in a consumption, it would pass unnoticed, or appear vapid to the million.

"If I raise a critical clatter about my ears by this assertion, which some may twist into a profanation of Shakspeare, I leave to Horace, who can fight battles better than I, to defend me.

> ' Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,
> Romani tollerit pedites equitesque cachinnum.'

" That Mr. Kemble did not misconceive the part is certain, for he told me, some time before the play was acted, that he feared the exertions requisite in Sir Edward Mortimer would strain his lungs more than Octavian in the Mountaineers.

" That he can strain his lungs to good purpose, in Octavian, is well known; and, after this, his own intimation, how will he escape the charge of wilful and direct delinquency, when, with such conception of the part, and with health recovered, he came forward in the true spirit of Bottom, and aggravated his voice so, that he roared you as gently as a sucking dove*. He insulted the town, and injured his employer and the author sufficiently in the first instance; in the second, he added to the insult and injury a hundred fold; and as often as he mangled the character (three or four times, I am uncertain which, after the first night's performance), he heaped aggravation upon aggravation.

" The most miserable mummer that ever disgraced the walls of a theatre, could not have been a stronger draw-back than Mr. Kemble. He was not only dull in himself, but the cause of dulness in others. Like the baleful *upas of Java*, his pestiferous influence infected all around him. When two actors come forward, to keep up the shuttle-cock of scenic fiction, if one plays slovenly, the other cannot maintain his game.

* Mr. Kemble informed me, previous to the second representation of the play, that he felt himself capable of exertion.

" Poor Bannister, jun. would he speak out (but I have never pressed him, and never shall press him to say a word on the subject), could bear ample testimony to the truth of this remark. He suffered like a man under the cruelty of Mezentius. All alive himself, he was tied to a corpse, which he was fated to drag about with him, scene after scene, which weighed him down, and depressed his vigour. Miss Farren, too, who might animate anything but a soul of lead, and a face of iron, experienced the same fate.

" I could proceed, and argue, and reason, and discuss, and tire the reader, as I have tired myself, (it is now, good friend, one o'clock in the morning,) to prove, further, that Mr. Kemble was unsound in my cause, and that he ruined my play; but I will desist here. I think I have prosed enough to manifest that my arguments are not unfounded.

" They who are experienced in dramatics will, I trust, see that I have made a fair ' extenuation' of myself; they who are impartial, will, I hope, be convinced that I have ' set down nought in malice.' The only question that may arise to shake, materially, the credit of all I have said, is ' How is it probable that Mr. Kemble should injure you thus without provocation? Is it in nature?—is it in man?' I can merely answer, that I am unconscious of having given him cause for provocation: that if I have given him cause, he has taken a bad mode of revenge; that Mr. Kemble's nature has frequently puzzled me in my observations upon it, and that I think him *a very extraordinary man.*

"But let him take this with him, should this crudely written preface ever fall in his way, I have committed it to paper *currente calamo.* I mean no allusion, no epithet, to apply to him as a private individual. As a private individual I give him not that notice which it might, here, be impertinent to bestow; but I have an undoubted right to discuss his merits, or demerits, in his public capacities of manager and actor; and my cause of complaint gives me a good reason as well as a right. His want of conduct, his neglect, his injustice, his oppression, his finesse, his person, his face, are in this point of view all open to my animadversion.

> 'He is my goods, my chattels;
> My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.'

And I would animadvert still further, did I not think I had already said sufficient to gain the object of guarding my own reputation. That object has solely swayed me in dwelling so long upon a 'plain tale,' encumbered with so strutting a hero as John Kemble.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

"I am indebted for the ground-work of this play to a novel entitled 'Things as they are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams, written by William Godwin.' Much of Mr. Godwin's story I have omitted; much which I have adopted, I have compressed; much I have added; and much I have taken the liberty to alter. All this I did that I might fit it, in the best of my judgment, to the stage.

" I have cautiously avoided all tendency to that which, vulgarly in many instances, is termed politics, with which many have told me Caleb Williams teems.

" The stage has now no business with politics; and should a dramatic author endeavour to dabble in them, it is the Lord Chamberlain's office to check his attempts, before they meet the eye of the public. I perused Mr. Godwin's book, as a tale replete with interesting incident, ingenious in its arrangement, masterly in its delineation of character, and forcible in its language. I considered it as right of common, and by a title which custom has given to dramatists, I enclosed it within my theatrical paling. However I may have tilled the land, I trust he discovers no intentional injury to him in my proceeding.

" To all the performers, excepting Mr. Kemble, I offer my hearty thanks for their exertions, which would have served me more, had not an actor, 'dark as Erebus,' cast a gloom upon them, which none of their efforts, however brilliant, could entirely disperse. But this does not diminish my obligations to them: so much indeed I owe to them, that when the play was last performed, it was rising, spite of Erebus, in favour with the town. It was advertised, day after day, at the bottom of the play-bills for repetition, till the promissory advertisement became laughable; and, at length, the advertisement and play were dropped altogether.

" If, after the foregoing preface, I should at a future period, bring the play forward in the Haymarket theatre, I am fully aware of the numbers

who, from party and pique, may now oppose it. I am aware, too, of the weight which a first impression leaves upon the minds of the most candid; still, so strong is my confidence in the genuine decision of a London audience who have a fair opportunity of exercising their judgment and feelings, which they have not had yet in respect of this play, that I believe I shall venture an appeal.

"The piece is now printed as it was acted on the first night, that they who peruse it may decide whether, even in that shape, with all the misfortunes before enumerated with which it was doomed to struggle, it should be for ever consigned to moulder on the shelf.

"The songs, duets, and chorusses, are intended merely as vehicles for musical effect. Some critics have pompously called them 'lyric poetry,' that by raising them to dignity they may more effectually degrade them; as men lift a stone very high, before they let it fall, when they would completely dash it to pieces.

"I now leave the gentle reader to the perusal of the play, and, lest my father's memory may be injured by mistakes; and in the confusion of after-times, the translator of Terence, and the author of The Jealous Wife, be supposed guilty of the Iron Chest, I shall, were I to reach the Patriarchal longevity of Methusaleh, continue, in all my dramatic productions, to subscribe myself,

GEORGE COLMAN THE YOUNGER."

"Piccadilly, July 20, 1796."

Colman in a later period, with more modesty, thus adverted to Caleb Williams:

"The difficulty of transplanting a novel, chapter after chapter, from the library to the theatre, is very obvious. This difficulty I experienced in my play of The Iron Chest, taken from the very interesting novel called 'Caleb Williams;' and, after much cudgelling of my brains, I abandoned the task in great measure, as hopeless. I followed some of the most prominent points, and mingled them with scenes of my own, whereby poor Caleb was greatly 'curtailed of his fair proportions;' but I was overloaded with Mr. Godwin's good things, and driven to relinquish a large portion of them, as sailors are sometimes obliged to lighten the ship by throwing their valuables overboard. I had nothing to do with the political tendency of the book, which is thought by many to inculcate levelling principles, and disrespect for the laws of our country."

The following droll bit of theatrical incident on 'Imitation,' is related by George Colman the younger. After eulogising the talents of Bannister, Mathews, and Yates, as wonderful professors of the art; he states,

"Among my hundred in the Haymarket theatre, there was an actor among them of the name of Davies, well known at the period as *Kiddy* Davies.

"He had served under Garrick, and always spoke contemptuously of the then immediate theatrical times, in comparing them with those of his great master. This man had remained unmimicked for very many years, till Caulfield the actor, bass singer, and very excellent imitator, joined my company, and

hit off the Kiddy's oddities in an instant. He jerked up one shoulder, twisted his mouth a little awry, and begun with, 'Well, I 'll be d—d, things were different in the late Mr. Garrick's time—yes, in the time of the immortal Mr. Garrick deceased.' The manner and utterance were so very exact and so strikingly ludicrous, that all the performers, who had never thought of taking off the Kiddy, went Kiddy Davies mad directly. It was like Sterne's account of the Andromeda of Euripides, which made all the Abderites run about their town, crying 'Cupid, Prince of Gods, and Men.' For one whole summer season I could not go behind my own scenes, without being annoyed by every actor, every little supernumerary brat, hired for a fairy or a fiend, accosting me with 'Well, I 'll be d—d, things were different in the late Mr. Garrick's time.' "

The life of a manager of a theatre is one of harass and perplexity, but we are inclined to think that George Colman the younger had not so much troublesome correspondence with his performers as his father endured before him. As a specimen of the style, we submit to our readers a lengthy epistle of old Macklin's to Colman the elder, while he was a proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, relative to his comedy of the Man of the World. A diplomatic minister having to arrange a knotty point regarding the division of a large territory, could not have been more guardedly diffuse.

"Sir, August 25, 1767.

"When your letter to me from Southampton came to London, I was on a tour in the country, so that I did not

see it until my return to town; otherwise I should have acknowledged the receipt of it sooner. In the proposals that I sent you on the 9th of August, I endeavoured to be as explicit as possible, and observed, at the same time, that if you should think any part of them improper or inconvenient, that I was willing to alter, or to accommodate them to the general conveniency of your theatre. To this I expected a plain direct answer; but instead of that, or of your specifying the least objection to the matters of agreement which I submitted to your consideration, you sent me counter-proposals, the substance of which, and of the letter that accompanied them, is so darkly expressed as to furnish ample matter for cavil and litigation, and what is still worse, they would give an opportunity to a manager to make a most unjust use of an agreement framed according to the purport of them. But that we may judge clearly of those counter-proposals, I shall here lay before you such articles of them as seem to me to be obscure, and too loose to be relied on; and in their order, I shall take the liberty of offering you my reasons why I think them, as far as I understand them, not quite consistent with equity.

ARTICLE THE FIRST.

" ' Mr. Macklin to perform twenty nights between the first of October and the twentieth of March, both inclusive, in the farce of Love à la Mode, and a new comedy of five acts, produced by himself, and such other plays as the manager shall appoint.'

" You will please to observe, Sir, that this article is binding on one side only. I am obliged by it to play in Love à la Mode and the new comedy, and in such plays as the manager shall appoint. But the manager, you may observe, has not bound himself, in any part of his proposals, to appoint any other plays for me to act in, nor any number of nights. So that, if he should not appoint other plays,

or does not bind himself to appoint twenty nights for me to act, why then I can act only in Love à la Mode and the new play, and in those too, only as few nights as he shall think proper to appoint. And let me observe, Sir, that such a stroke of management would not be new in your conduct with me; for in the course of a former agreement that I made with you for twenty nights, you frequently refused to appoint a competent number of plays for me to act my twenty nights in; and by that management, I acted but fourteen nights out of the twenty agreed for: and though in those fourteen nights I brought near five hundred pounds more than Mr. Powell and Mrs. Yates in conjunction for the same number of nights in succession, with all the strength and expense of the theatre added to them, yet notwithstanding the omission of the six remaining nights of the twenty, you stopped one hundred and twenty pounds out of the four hundred I ought to have received, though I was always ready to act my twenty nights out when called upon. To this loss I submitted, rather than go to law with you; but as my experience of your manner of making agreements, and of your fulfilling them, has cost me so dearly, you ought not to be offended that I endeavour to be as clear as possible with you in all future matters; and indeed, the following articles of your proposals to me will manifest what your intentions are in this business, and the necessity there is of being most explicit and minute in our agreement."

ARTICLE THE SECOND.

"'The nights of his (Macklin's) performance to be distributed according to the pleasure of the manager.'

"This article is binding only on Macklin, who is to obey such distribution of nights as the manager's pleasure shall direct, which, as observed above, may be only five or six nights out of the twenty; for still the manager carefully

avoids binding himself down to call on Macklin to act any certain number of nights; though the number intended is plainly twenty—and the mutual emolument of that number of nights, to the parties, the evident foundation and intention of the agreement; which intention, every one of your articles, in my opinion, is dexterously calculated to destroy; though some of them are more speciously suggested than others, of which the immediate following one, is a striking, though a subtle instance."

ARTICLE THE THIRD.

" ' Mr. Macklin to be paid twenty pounds, for each of the said twenty nights of his performance.'

" Here Macklin is not, according to his proposals to Mr. Colman, to have twenty pounds certain, for twenty nights, provided he will, when called upon, act up to that number. No, he is to have twenty pounds for each night of his performance only, the number of which nights must depend on the will of the manager."

ARTICLE THE FOURTH.

" ' In case the new comedy should fail.'

" Here, Sir, I must beg leave to stop, even upon the first clause of this extraordinary article, in order to observe, that did the profit on your part depend entirely, or in any material degree, on the success of the comedy, so as, in speculation, obviously to lessen the prospect of your profit, this precaution of failure might have its fairness and its use: yet, even in that case, Sir, I think that whatever mark or token your judgment deems to be a failure of this comedy, ought, in justice, sure, to be expressed previously in this fourth article. I grant that the mark of failure may be lodged within the equity of your own impartial breast. But men love to have the law promulged. Conscience, formerly, they say, was an unerring judge, but of late years it hath been so manufactured by patriots,

courtiers, Change-alley brokers, ministers of state, sometimes by managers of theatres too—nay, and even where one would least expect it, by lawyers themselves, who are, you know, the legal watchmen, and detectors of such ingenuity: I say, such is the nature of the human machine now-a-days, that men, in similar cases to ours, do not like to rest their property or agreement on the emotions of conscience; as those of them that relate to justice and fair dealing may be tardy, especially in matters of criticism.

"Besides, you know too, that as you are a party, it would be contrary to the rules of natural justice, that you should be the sole judge in your own cause.

"But suppose, Sir, that this comedy, by your critical touchstone, should be found on the proving, to be of as trifling unpleasurable matter, or of as flimsy a texture, and as unprofitable as some modern pieces that might be pointed out. I say, suppose this should be the consequence of the operation of your private touchstone! Yet still I think that *that* proof, as it may be partial, is not of so convincing a nature, nor the point itself of so material a consideration in this agreement as to oblige you thus dexterously, and let me add, thus rigorously, to seek a power to deprive me of any part of the four hundred pounds that I demand for the use of my talents and my labour for twenty nights, or by our not agreeing, to defeat yourself of the advantage I may be of to your theatre; consequently to your fellow-managers. For your theatrical accounts will tell you, Sir, that, in all probability, without the aid of the comedy in question, I can bring more money to your house in twenty nights than your whole company; that is, provided you will act the part of a fair and honest manager, which is to appoint a competent number of plays for me to act in, with Love à la Mode.

"This assertion, at first reading, may raise your mirth, perhaps, and be called a boast. But upon reflection, and a small exertion of candour, you will find it is not of that

species, but an uncontrovertible opinion, fairly founded on the accounts of your theatre, on the nights that I have played there, compared with those of your company for the same number of nights. Therefore, not the spirit of boasting, but the necessity of truth and fair argument, have forced the assertion from me; but, Sir, the whole matter hinges on one plain proposition. If you will appoint a proper number of plays for me to act in, there can be no doubt of there being great houses for twenty nights, in which case I shall not be defeated nor tricked out of any part of my four hundred pounds. If you will not appoint them, why then, Sir, any failure of the receipts, or in the number of the twenty nights, ought to be placed to your mismanagement, not to my inability: nor to the failing of the comedy, which comedy, like every other new piece, is in its nature a mere matter of risk, not of insurance by the emolument of an author, and merely as a venture, Sir, it is thrown into this agreement; not from a supposed want of power in me to attract great audiences for twenty nights without it, but from the honest vanity that I feel, as an author and an actor, of making the agreement as profitable as I can to the managers that employ me; and of adding the novelty and variety of a new piece to the entertainment of the public on the nights that I shall act. And should your dramatic touchstone be possessed of so nice an antipathy to the errors or dulness of this comedy, and prove so effectually severe as to deprive me of the pleasure of my thus endeavouring to entertain the public, by your insisting on a mode of agreement that would entitle you, at will, to curtail the greater part of my twenty nights; why then, Sir, in that case, I confess I should not think favourably either of your morals, or of your skill as a manager; nor do I believe that any person who knows the value of common sense, and fair dealing in business, would think more kindly of you than I should on that occasion; but, Sir, the whole of this fourth article taken together, may, perhaps, do more justice

to your judgment, your spirit, and your intention as a manager, than any article or argument that has been yet advanced in this letter, therefore the whole must be laid before you.

" ' In case the new comedy should fail—a proportionable deduction to be made from the number of the above twenty nights of Mr. Macklin's performance.'

" It is worth observing, Sir, with what dexterity each article of your proposals gradually rises, and mutually strengthens each other, in your design of shaping such a kind of an agreement as would permit me to receive only just so much of my proposed four hundred pounds as your generosity should allow me. As you yourself are often remarkable for a lively metaphor, I hope you will give me leave to sport one that I think is not quite unapt on this occasion, for it is of an infernal nature. This fourth article, I think, may be called the CLOVEN FOOT of your proposals, which begins to shew itself through the veil of specious expression that has been so carefully thrown over it. But, without metaphor or allegory, it appears in every article of your proposals that, instead of acting with that liberal, encouraging spirit that should direct a manager of a theatre, you seem to be studying only how to hamper and embarrass. At least I am sure in this article you have greatly hampered my understanding, for what, in fair dealing, common sense, and common justice, you mean ' by a proportionable deduction of my twenty nights,'. I own I cannot comprehend; but suppose that from that expressive term, deduction, a meaning should be guessed at? What shall we do with that equitable term, proportionable? Must that too, like the touchstone of the failing of the comedy, be left entirely to the conscientious emotions of your equity? Why, then, Sir, as I observed above, your proportionable deduction may be fifteen or sixteen nights, for there is nothing in your proposals to the contrary, by which manœuvre I may be

detained in the bonds of disappointment, I might have said, of a manager's deceit, from the 1st of October to the 20th of March, for fourscore or a hundred pounds, instead of four hundred. But for a moment, Sir, pray let me ask, what reason from your experience of my use to your theatre, can you, or any fair judgment, assign for any deduction at all in this agreement, proportionable or otherwise? when, if you will but oblige yourself to appoint a certain number of plays for me to act in for twenty nights in the space of five months, with Love à la Mode, your theatre, if we may judge by experience, I say, will constantly be full on those nights; and this opinion, Sir, is not mine alone, but, by what I can learn from common conversation, it seems to be the general opinion of the public, nay, I believe it is even your own opinion too; therefore your hesitating about so advantageous an agreement, the unpopular state of your company considered, is a mystery to every person that I have heard speak of it, who all agree that something more is meant by your conduct in this affair than plainly meets the understanding.

" But as an instance, nay a proof that I think the houses will be great on the nights that I shall act, I here again offer you what I offered you last year, and this year in your late proposals; which is, to relinquish the four hundred pounds that I demand, and to give you one hundred and eighty pounds for the money that shall be received on each night of the twenty nights, so that all I shall desire for my labour and the use of my writings for the twenty nights is only a benefit in February, and the surplus money received on each night after you have taken out your hundred and eighty pounds. This proposal makes it a clear point that you may have a certain profit of near a hundred pounds a night, for twenty nights, by an agreement with me; should you not choose the adventure of giving me four hundred pounds certain, and a benefit for my acting in ' Love à la Mode,' the new comedy, and whatever plays besides you shall

previously settle for that number of nights. But to your next and last article, which leaves no room for a single doubt about your design in this affair."

ARTICLE THE FIFTH.

" ' Whenever the receipts or exhibition of the comedy shall fall below one hundred and fifty pounds, it shall be in the power of the manager to discontinue the performance of it.'

Concerning this article, Sir, I must, without ceremony, take the liberty of expostulating with your morals, as well as with your knowledge and your ingenuity. You know, Sir, that in the run of a new piece of the greatest merit, it may, on some particular night, nay indeed, in my theatrical records, it ever has, fallen greatly below its average receipts.

" You know, too, that a manager may so politically and injuriously manage that it shall fall below one hundred and fifty pounds. I say he may, for reasons best known to himself. And now, Sir, in such a case, accidental or contrived, let me appeal to your morals, particularly those that relate to a theatrical law-giver, for such I find you are determined to be. Would you then be so cruel as to make this ingenuity of a manager, and this failing of one night, incidental to every new piece, a cause for you to dictate this prohibitory law, merely that you might have the power of discontinuing a new piece, in order to destroy a portion, or the whole of a writer's expected gain. This would be ruling with a rod of iron, indeed; such a law might furnish opportunities for malevolence, revenge, and envy, to gratify their appetites; but it never would tend to encourage writers, or to improve the English drama.

" From a few such laws, Sir, the world would be apt to stile you the Draco of the English theatre, and what was severely said of the great Athenian law-giver, might with justice be applied to the Covent Garden Draco, that he wrote his laws, not with ink but blood, so cruelly would they operate on writers and actors.

" But, Sir, without allusions, let me request you to consider what the criterion of your law of prohibition is.

" One hundred and fifty pounds; enormous! unheard of! unequitable! A criterion by which the theatre gains, as I have been informed, fifty pounds; and yet the manager claims by compact with an author a power of discontinuing such a piece, in order to make a proportionable deduction from the reward of the writer. A reward not given by the manager, but by the favour of the public. But pray, Sir, on discontinuing a play that brought fifty pounds profit, or, on your rejecting my offer of one hundred and eighty pounds per night, which would be eighty pounds profit for twenty nights, in such a case ought you not, in justice to your character as a manager, and to the trust that you exercise over the property of your fellow managers, I say, ought you not to be certain that the receipts of your houses will never fall below one hundred and eighty pounds? If they should, you know, so far you injure the property by refusing that sum.

" I have heard of many tricks, and shufflings, and illiberal hardships that avarice and the insolence of office have laid upon authors and actors, but never of anything so discouraging as this of stopping a new play, when it brings an undoubted profit to a theatre; and that too, for no other end, than to curtail an author's reward. Pray, Sir, did you ever make this proposal to Mr. Hull, Mr. Bickerstaff, Mrs. Lennox, Mr. Cumberland, or to any other author? Has any new piece, during your management, fallen below the criterion of one hundred and fifty pounds? I am sure some of them did fall below that criterion; and yet, you did not, that I ever heard, claim or exercise that condemnatory power. The malignant pleasure of being the legislator of that egregious law, the inauspicious genius of the theatre reserved for you; and the hardship of being the first victim to it, your memorable management intends for me.

But, before you finally resolve to carry such a law into execution, let me advise you to ask yourself if such a measure would be wise in you as a manager, entrusted as the middle man between the public and their entertainment, and the author who is to furnish it? Besides, Sir, recollect that you yourself wrote for the stage before you were a manager: did Mr. Garrick impose such a law on you? or, did he even hint it to you? if he had, would you have submitted to such an unprecedented, arbitrary, unreasonable stretch of power? Nay, since you have been a manager of the theatre, and the sole judge and rewarder of your own merit, a state of as delicate a trust as possibly can exist in the ordinary course of human dealings, and in men of principle, or who have the least sense of character or moral decency, it is a state that always excites the most cautious conduct, and the nicest notions of equity. In this opportunity of selfishness, and of conduct that might be liable to suspicion, it would have been a noble mark of an equitable mind — a lover of rectitude, and of a chary honour, to have shown the world that you scorned, sordidly, to avail yourself of your dominion and your trust in the gratification of your avarice, or your vanity as a man and an author.

" I am sure, whatever your practice has been, that your theory must allow the remark to be just; especially, as you might so easily have established that laudable unsuspecting character, only by imposing the same law upon yourself as an author, that you now offer to impose upon me.

" This conduct would have been the mark of a mind wherein the moral elements were well mixed; and men then, with justice, might have stood up and said to all the world, this is indeed a man, and a fair fellow-manager and partner; but now, that point is *sub judice*; therefore, all tongues should be silent on it, until justice bids them speak.

" All that now remains then is, to ask you a few plain questions. ' Did you impose that law upon yourself? was it not necessary by analogy, that you should have done it? Did the receipts to your ' Man and Wife,' on any nights, fall below one hundred and fifty pounds? if you answer in the affirmative, I ask, did you discontiuue ' Man and Wife,' or did you make a proportionable deduction from your emoluments as an author, in consequence of the low receipts to it, and of the enormous expense of a three-act piece in prose, that stands unexampled; and for which, though it was cut in a few weeks into a common farce of two acts, you rewarded yourself by two benefits, though, by the usage of the theatre, you should only have rewarded yourself with one. I have now, Sir, gone through your proposals, and the probable effect of them, had I agreed to their purport; if any thinking or expression has trespassed on the law of decency, it must have been mere escapes, not intentions to irritate; and that you must attribute as much to the unequitable design that appeared to me on your side, which naturally excites animadversion, as to any quickness of spirit on mine. The comments are long, I grant; indeed, rather tedious than entertaining to you I am afraid, but the text, as a very old writer observes, was like the ways of a litigious cunning man, specious, subtle, and dexterously obscure: to detect the reserve and scope of which you are sensible, require a larger space than the ordinary ingenuity of an ordinary genius, and that, Sir, must be my apology.

" I must close this letter with a remark on managers of theatres in general, who in many things resemble the managers of States; particularly in matters relative to dominion, ability, and integrity. On these points there is not anything they hate so much as truth—except the man who speaks it. For which reason, I assure you, Sir, I should not have risked your displeasure on either of those points, in the present case, had I not thought that truth, though it

made against you, would be the best argument I could use to a gentleman of your turn of thinking, in order to show the nature of your proposals, the fairness and utility of my own; and by that effect to induce you to an agreement upon equitable terms, and fairly expressed.

I am, Sir, with great respect,
Your most obedient and devoted servant,

CHARLES MACKLIN."

To George Colman, Esq.

This is a very clever letter: a much better controversial epistle than any Actor of the present day would, or probably *could* write.

The letter and the man, are in perfect character; but the reader must look at the old fellow, with all his early prejudices against managers, with his bitter, uncontrolable, sarcastic spirit; still he contrives to impress you with the justice of the case.

Imagine the delight of the Manager Colman on coming down to his breakfast table, probably anticipating a quiet meal, but finding this stupendous packet of woes, from Mr. Macklin, staring him in the face; a certain number of the lines, though delivered with somewhat of the language of respect, containing the most caustic remarks, and deliberate insults—and insults from a man, too aged to enter the lists with!

CHAPTER IX.

1795—1802.

Doctor Arnold—Haymarket Theatre 1796—Elliston from Bath—Projected Entertainment in Lent — Suppressed by the Lord Chamberlain—'My Night Gown and Slippers'—S. J. Arnold—Munden—Mrs. Davenport—The Heir at Law—Supposed derivation of the character of Dr. Pangloss—The Italian Monk—Mrs. Abington—Blue-Beard—O'Keefe—Blue Devils—Henry Johnson—False and True—Death of John Palmer—Feudal Times—Fortune's Frolic—Castle of Sorrento—Sighs—Red-Cross Knights—The Poor Gentleman—Obi—Point of Honour—What a Blunder—The Review—The Gipsy Prince—Michael Kelly—The Corsair—The Voice of Nature—Two Harveys—Novel plan for opening the Haymarket.

THE annexed letter from Colman the younger to Dr. Arnold, will prove the high consideration he had for him.

"September 8th, 1795, Piccadilly.

"MY DEAR ARNOLD,

"I am so eager to convince you of your mistake, that what is to follow, (and God knows how I shall word it!) will probably appear as a jumble; but you have jumbled my feelings about it with your letter, so you must e'en swallow the mixture you have made. Long, my dear Arnold, as I have been in the habit of meeting you, believe me, I never met you without pleasure; and if my hatchet

face and melancholy muscles have now and then (when we have accidentally met) exhibited more solemnity than usual, attribute it to some previous and recent vexation, which is ever occurring in my business. In short, attribute it to anything but coolness towards you, which, upon the word of a friend, I never for a single moment felt. When I was a boy I was taught to regard you, and long before this thirty-third year of my life, you have convinced me that my teacher was in the right. Do not suppose me frivolous enough to fly off from an old friend upon groundless pique; and do not suppose me wrong-headed enough to fancy I have a right to be piqued at all because I have been a delinquent. You have made my excuses very delicately for me about your son, where, to say the truth, I know not well what excuse to make from myself. However, I will endeavour at one, when I see you. We are to meet, I understand, to-morrow, at the banker's. I could almost be angry at your mistake, but it has drawn so kind and friendly a letter from you, that I find, upon striking a balance, I receive more pleasure than pain from the circumstance.

Believe me, my dear Arnold,

Sincerely and affectionately your's,

G. COLMAN."

The Haymarket season of 1796, commenced on the 11th of June, with Peeping Tom, The Liar, and a new farce called 'Banian Day.' Palmer was the stock actor of all-work, and Fawcett was retained as principal low comedian: Charles Kemble, Miss Decamp, Aickin, Mrs. Gibbs, &c. were then amongst the utilitarians. On the 21st, O'Keefe, produced a new piece in three Acts, entitled 'The Magic Banner,' but not with his usual success. On the 4th of July, John Bannister rejoined the

company; and Elliston came from the Bath theatre, and played Octavian, Sheva, and other characters, in a style that promised well for his after celebrity; Sylvester Daggerwood (altered from New Hay in the Old Market), by Colman, aided by the imitations of Caulfield, was very attractive. Cumberland brought forward a play called 'Don Pedro,' which was a failure. In this day, we smile at the idea of Jack Bannister acting Hamlet, and the Prince of Wales, in Henry the Fourth. The play bill announced his performance of the latter character *for that night only*, on which a contemporary critic remarks, 'so much the better.' The theatre closed September 16, for the benefit of Waldron the Prompter, and Sub-manager.

Early in 1797 Colman commenced writing an entertainment which he had projected to be performed at the Haymarket during Lent; but which the interference of the Lord Chamberlain prevented. He then published a portion of it under the title of 'My Night Gown and Slippers; or, Tales in Verse; written in an elbow chair, by George Colman the younger.' The tales were three in number, the 'Maid of the Moor, or the Water Fiends' (a burlesque on the then existing rage for German ballads), the others were the 'Newcastle Apothecary,' and 'Lodgings for Single Gentlemen:' the whole were connected by a conversation between 'Tom, Dick, and Will, an alehouse triumvirate,' who rail at modern poets and novel writers: The Newcastle Apothecary was avowedly an imitation of the manner of Peter Pindar. This little volume was most

favourably received by the public, and went through several editions.

The following letter from Colman to Dr. Arnold, alludes to the stoppage of the entertainment.

" Sunday Night, Piccadilly.

" My Dear Arnold,

" I feel more unpleasantly than I can tell you (so I leave you to conceive it) in writing to you on money subjects. Take, therefore, a plain *tale:* though tales, now-a-days, according to Lord Bishops and Lord Chamberlains, are of ill-omen.

" I am so thrown back in consequence of the failure of of our *Lenten Entertainment* (which I reckoned on as a certainty), that I am obliged to apply to those who are more 'blessed with affluence' than I am. Can you, my dear Arnold, lend me two hundred pounds? for the repayment of which, in the summer (or before), I give you the word of an old friend, and any other security in my power. I am in need of this occasional supply to take up a bill, which is soon becoming due; and I have every thing but an absolute promise of the renewal of accommodation after I have honoured my acceptance, so that you see, I was not hasty in saying I might probably reimburse you *before* our Haymarket season commences.

" They who ought to *hunt* for me upon those emergencies, are *bad dogs* at best, or I should not apply to you. I am going on Thursday to Mountain's. Pray send me a line in the course of to-morrow.

Truly your's,

G. Colman."

The next letter also relates to the Lent entertainment.

" My Dear Arnold, Tuesday, Piccadilly.

" I have just parted with Mr. Hull, who has advised me to send the letter to Lord Salisbury, and promises to speak

to him on the subject when they meet (in two or three days) in town. The business, however, seems to wear an unpleasant aspect. Hull read the sketch of our plan, and says he does not suppose that any objection will be made to it on the score of morality, but that the Bishop of London may be the obstacle. The mischief, I find, originates in the actors, who gave a scrambling and improper jumble the year before last in the Haymarket, on which the Bishop wrote to suppress all entertainments except Oratorios in Lent. Now could we by any means get an immediate application to the Bishop of London in our favour? that we may have it to say to Lord Salisbury, when he comes to town, that the Bishop has no objection. This would smooth our way prodigiously. Have you no channel, no influence that you could directly kick up, to be of weight with this reverend divine? Let somebody give a sketch of our plan to him.

"Perhaps you have power enough with the Bishop of Rochester to induce him to stir in our favour. We certainly should not lose a moment. Will you give me a call to-morrow?

Your's ever, G. C."

From Colman to Dr. Arnold.

"7th March, 1797, Piccadilly.

"I cannot leave town, and I am just going, without sending you a line to thank you, my dear Arnold, for your letter. Alas! we are two unlucky dogs!

"Could you have assisted me now, it would have rejoiced me; and I am sure you would if you could. I feel your explanation and intentions to be most kind and friendly.

Ever truly your's,

G. COLMAN."

The following letter from Colman to Dr. Arnold, on the subject of money, is very characteristic of the writer.

" 18th May, 1797, Mountain's.

" My Dear Arnold,

" I appointed to meet your friend Savignac, on Thursday next, that we might go to Blackfriars on that day at eleven ; but we neither named the precise time, nor the place of our meeting. Will you be so good as to fix this matter with him, and send me a line? He mentioned to me that you had drawn out stock which would make our matter up, about eleven hundred pounds instead of the thousand, and that you said I might have it if I had occasion for it. On deliberation, and looking over my arrangements, I will, if you hold in the same mind, accept the offer and make the annuity accordingly ; and now, my dear Arnold, let me thank you (although I am awkward at thanks, and say much less than I feel) for your goodness and real friendship on this occasion. I hate all money transactions in general ; they are damned nauseous, nasty, sour things, that go against my stomach ; but you have contrived to throw into your draughts such a mixture of warmth and kindness, that I shall never think of it without pleasure. I return to town on Wednesday, and am working tightly for the summer. I was in some hope that Robin would have dropped in upon me. Remember me to him, and all your's.

I am, my dear Arnold,

Your's truly and affectionately,

G. Colman."

By Robin, Colman meant Dr. Arnold's son, who was so christened by him, in consequence of his having produced at the Haymarket his first and successful musical afterpiece, called ' Auld Robin Gray.'

The summer performances of 1797 began about the usual period. Munden was engaged in the place of Bannister: or we should rather say, that he was intended to succeed Parsons. Mrs. Davenport was retained this season for the old women, formerly played by Mrs. Hopkins,—a great improvement; and the sudden retirement of that charming vocalist, Miss Leak, gave an opportunity for a young lady of the name of Andrews (another pupil of Dr. Arnold) to make her *début*. A farce entitled 'The Irish Legacy' was produced at this time, but without success. It was a very early work of a young author, who subsequently wrote with considerable popurity, Samuel James Arnold; the music was composed by his father.

The best production of this season, was the 'Heir at Law.' Of the merits of this agreeable comedy there can be but one opinion. The characters (the amusing Pangloss, perhaps, excepted) are true pictures of common life. Mrs. Inchbald remarked, "Invention, observation, good intention, and all the powers of a complete dramatist, are in this comedy displayed, except one—*taste* seems wanting; but this failure is evidently not an error in judgment, but an escape from labour. The finer colours for more polished mankind, would demand the artist's more laborious skill." With all due deference to the fair critic, the dramatic author, to be effective on the stage, must work freely, and, like the scene-painter (to use a technical term), with the pound brush!

Of the comedy of the Heir at Law, a critic has

remarked of Doctor Pangloss, one of the most pleasant of the *dramatis personæ*, that the originality of the character may be reasonably disputed, by a reference to 'Fortune in Her Wits,' a comedy translated from the 'Naufragium Joculare' of Abraham Cowley, and printed in 1705. A few speeches may support this assertion, first noticing that this presumed original of the modern pedant is called 'Sententious Gerund,' and travels to Dunkirk with his pupils, Grinn and Shallow :—

(Act I., Scene 1.)—*Enter* Gerund, Shallow, *and* Grinn.

Gerund. *Egressi optatâ Troes potiuntur arena.* How lucky was the omen to light on that sentence of the Prince of poets, Virgil.

* * * * * *

Grinn. Is it not very hard, I cannot so much as make one little jest, on my arrival in a strange land?

Shallow. Hey—ho—

Gerund. *Cur imo gemitum de pectore ducis*, according to the poet.

Shallow. Ah, tutor, I can't think without a sigh of that fine breakfast I presented the fish with, when we first put to sea.

Gerund. *Quis talia fundo, Myrmidonum Dolopumes aut duri Miles Ulissi.* (*Ulissi* is put there *euphoniæ grâ*) *temperet a lacrymis*—according to the poet! Truly, the antients observed very wisely, fire, water, and woman, are three evils.

Shallow. Tutor, there is one thing more that has been in my head ever since, and that is, when upon the deck we could see land afar off, still the nearer we came, that seemed to run the further from us. This is an observation of my own, Tutor.

Gerund. Ay, Pupil, *per varias causas, per tot discrimina verum tendimus in*—(I don't know where) according to the poet!"

It is fair to conjecture, that Colman, who was a reader of old plays, took his idea of the learned and

amusing Doctor from the above character: and it hardly need be mentioned that the appellation of Pangloss is derived from the 'Candide' of Voltaire.

Mr. Boaden produced this year a piece called 'The Italian Monk,' in which John Palmer, C. Kemble, and Miss Decamp, exerted their talents most effectively. It was successful, and the season of 1797 terminated to the satisfaction of manager and public.

This year the Covent Garden Managers induced the celebrated Mrs. Abington to re-appear on the stage, and Colman, to introduce her, wrote a very clever prologue.

On the 16th of January, 1798, Colman produced the romance of Blue Beard, at Drury-Lane Theatre. As a dramatic piece little can be said in its favour, but the *spectacle* was grand in the extreme: the procession was the best regulated effect of pageantry that had been at that time witnessed on the stage. Michael Kelly was very happy in the selection of the music; Mrs. Crouch, in the zenith of her beauty, was the original Fatima; Miss Decamp gained great popularity by her performance and singing in Irene; Bannister and Suett were very pleasant; and the celebrated Madame Parisot danced exquisitely. The Castle Spectre and Blue Beard ran together for a great number of nights, with unprecedented success.

About this period, O'Keefe was preparing for publication a complete collection of his dramatic works, for which he was soliciting a subscription, at the head of which was the name of the Prince of Wales,

who sent the blind bard fifty guineas; the Dukes of York and Clarence also subscribed liberally. Mr. Harris generously granted O'Keefe permission to publish all the performances of which he had purchased the copyright; but Mr. Colman and the Trustees of the Haymarket Theatre for some cause refused to allow the Dead Alive, Son-in-Law, Agreeable Surprise, Peeping Tom, and the Young Quaker, (which had been purchased by the elder Colman for a mere trifle, to prevent their being represented on the boards of the winter houses), to be included in this publication. There was illiberality in this refusal; for had the pieces in question been sold to a publisher, the property would by that time have reverted to the author, more than fourteen years (the then limited period allowed by the Copyright Act) having elapsed since the last five dramas were produced. Mr. Erskine was consulted, whether, in point of law, the detention of literary property after the term prescribed by act of Parliament was justifiable, but the opinion of that eminent counsel left O'Keefe without any hopes. Colman the elder, in his agreements, had turned his own legal knowledge to good account.

On the 24th of April Colman produced Blue Devils (a translation from the French of Patrat), at Covent-Garden Theatre, for Fawcett's benefit. This piece failed; though when it was afterwards produced at the Haymarket it became a favourite piece, and has continued so to the present day. On the 12th of June, the little theatre opened with the Deaf Lover, the Battle of Hexham, and Blue Devils. On the 23rd,

a drama was brought out, entitled the Inquisitor; it was attributed to Holcroft, but from the reception it met with, no one was eager to acknowledge it. Henry Johnston, then denominated the Scotch Roscius, made a favourable stand during this season; and on the 21st of July, Mr. Boaden's play of The Cambro-Britons was represented, and with the aid of Munden, Suett, J. Johnstone, C. Kemble, H. Johnston, Robert Palmer, Miss Decamp, Mrs. Gibbs, and Mrs. Bland, was successful.

On the 11th of August was produced the drama of False and True, or the Irishman in Italy, in which Johnstone stood prominent. Colman wrote him a song that had a very whimsical effect on the stage; it was addressed to an old coquette, by Paddy O'Raffarty, who professes to be violently enamoured of her charms. The words in *italics* were given *aside*, with indescribable humour by Johnstone.

" The sweet kiss of my dear—*is like musty old hay;*
Fal de ral, fal de ral, la.
She 's as lovely as morning—*a morning that 's gray;*
Fal de ral, &c.
Nature's sweet red and white in her countenance lies;
Fal de ral, &c.
For she 's white in the lips, and she 's red in the eyes;
Fal de ral, &c.
Your look is just that which is majesty styl'd;
Fal de ral, &c.
So awful—*it frightens man, woman, and child;*
Fal de ral, &c.
I 'll wed you in church, just to shew my regard;
Fal de ral, &c. &c.
Then lovingly—*bury you in the churchyard;*
Fal de ral, &c. &c.

On the 2nd of August this year, John Palmer dropped down dead on the stage at Liverpool. This is not the only awful instance of sudden death under similar circumstances, for it will be recollected that Molière died on the stage. He was acting Le Malade Imaginaire, when he was seized with a real illness that proved fatal.

On the 18th of August, the Heir at Law and the Children in the Wood were performed at the Opera House, by Mr. Colman's company, for the benefit of the orphan daughters of John Palmer, which produced about 700 guineas. On the 29th of August, Charles Kemble essayed the difficult character of Shylock, and Mrs. Henry Johnston made her appearances in Ophelia and Roxalana. The theatre closed after a very successful season.

On the publication of a third edition of The Iron Chest, Colman thought proper to omit the motto, the offensive preface, the advertisement, and the postscript. If this did not amount to a formal recantation of that scurrility which did more harm to the author than to the actor, it showed at least that Colman was sorry for having employed it.

On the 19th of January, 1799, Colman produced a melo-dramatic romance at Drury Lane, entitled Feudal Times, or the Banquet Gallery; it was showy, but dull. There was little novelty in the plan, neither interest nor ingenuity in the construction of the story; nor was there anything attractive in it upon the stage except what was supplied by the composer, the mechanist, and the scene-painter. The

amazing success of the play of Pizarro induced the manager of the little theatre, at the beginning of the season, to bring out a translation of a drama by Kotzebue, called Family Distress. This was not relished, but amends were soon made by the production of Till Allingham's capital farce of Fortune's Frolic: Fawcett was admirable in Robin Roughhead. Pizarro still kept Drury Lane open with enormous houses during the dog-days, and this very considerably embarrassed the Haymarket manager. The Castle of Sorrento was the next piece brought forward, and was successful. This was written by Colonel, afterwards Sir Ralph Hamilton. Mr. Attwood composed some very pretty and effective music for it.

On the 30th of July, a comedy, entitled Sighs, or the Daughter, was successfully represented. This was a translation from the German, by Prince Hoare. A beautiful air, composed and charmingly sung by Mrs. Bland, was introduced, "'Twas in the solemn midnight hour;" the words were by Cumberland. On the 21st of August, Mr. Holman produced a drama, called the Red-Cross Knights, an alteration of the Robbers of Schiller. The theatre closed on the 14th of September, with an address by Fawcett, who had proved himself a most industrious actor and spirited stage manager.

On the 11th of February, 1800, Colman brought before the public his comedy of the Poor Gentleman, at Covent Garden Theatre, with great success. It was represented for many nights with roars of

laughter. Munden, Lewis, Fawcett, and Mrs. Mattocks were irresistible in it. The Poor Gentleman was of considerable service to the treasury.

The following letter from Colman to Dr. Arnold alludes to pecuniary transactions.

Sunday, February 23, 1800,
Piccadilly.

"My Dear Arnold,

"I was in hopes of seeing you to-day, at Fawcett's, but it seems he is obliged to postpone our meeting. Pray let me know at what office the life was insured, and I will not neglect attending there in the early part of the week. I scarcely know what to say to you on the subject of my trespass on your patience. Sheridan's most injurious encroachment upon my last season, and, since that, some very unlucky circumstances and untoward disappointments have thrown me back.

"The days of summer will come round, when I hope and trust the sun will not shine inauspiciously upon me. I am eager for an opportunity of doing all in my power on your account, who have done so much on mine.

"Ever truly yours,
G. Colman."

The summer season at the Haymarket of 1800, put forth its blossoms about the customary period, and the harvest was unusually fruitful; for the little Theatre made a great hit with an interesting pantomimical drama, called 'Obi; or, Three Fingered Jack.' This production was decidedly the best of its class. It was arranged by Fawcett, who had accidentally met with a narrative on which it was founded—a historical fact recorded by Dr. Moseley

in his 'Treatise on Sugar.' The recital was highly exciting, and was very accurately followed in the action of the pantomime, which was original on the stage at the time. The incidents and situations were well contrived by Fawcett. Baron Trenck, Caleb Williams, Count Fathom, and Gil Blas have met with adventures nearly as perilous; but they had not been previously so forcibly introduced to the eye. Difficulties gradually presenting themselves, had not been so demonstratively, and unexpectedly, yet naturally surmounted. It was justly denominated a pantomimical drama, for it had the merit of dramatic arrangement. Charles Kemble was the animated representative of Three Fingered Jack, and Miss Decamp displayed the graces of her figure and accomplishments, which, in this line of the drama, she at that period, incontestably possessed. Farley exhibited his usual cleverness. The music, principally composed by Dr. Arnold, was most appropriate, and the scenery by Whitmore very much surpassed any former effort of the Haymarket Theatre. This successful piece was followed up on the 15th of July by Charles Kemble's elegant adaptation of 'Le Deserteur of Mercier,' under the title of 'The Point of Honour.' By the way, Monsieur Mercier was indebted to a German original for this play. The excellent acting of C. Kemble, Barrymore, Fawcett, Miss Decamp, and Miss Chapman, rendered the Point of Honour very attractive. On the 14th August, Holman produced a comic opera, entitled 'What a Blunder?' There was a bustle and variety in this piece that kept the spectators

continually alive. In it Irish Johnstone had an original character (Sir Sturdy O'Tremor), a stout Hibernian in the plenitude of health, imagining himself in the last stage of a consumption: Johnstone was exquisitely ludicrous as the hectic Hercules. Mrs. Mountain made an advance in the good graces of the public in this opera, the music of which was by John Davy, a pupil of the celebrated Jackson of Exeter. Mr. Davy was an original composer, on whose melodies subsequent aspirants have worked. Let any one compare Davy's beautiful air of 'Just like love is yonder Rose,' with C. Horn's 'Cherry Ripe.' In addition to the plums of this fortunate season, Colman on the 31st of August presented his 'Review; or, the Wags of Windsor.' Without plot or interest, the dialogue and the characters are so pleasant, that if in 1840, the Review, even tolerably acted, is amusing, what must the farce have been, supported as it was forty years ago!

Nearly, if not entirely, the whole of this capital farce was written, or rather put together by Colman in sudden haste at Dr. Arnold's table in Duke-street. The character and principal dialogue, &c. of Caleb Quotem, was transferred, without much addition, from a piece called 'Throw Physic to the Dogs,' which had failed a season or two before. Songs which Dr. Arnold had by him, ready cut and dried, were adapted, and even characters introduced to sing them. 'A Poor Little Gipsy I wander forlorn,' sung by Mrs. Bland, and another ballad sung by Miss Decamp, disguised as a young recruit, were written by Samuel James Arnold, and when so

adapted, proved a high feather in his youthful cap of vanity.

In this season, a letter of strong remonstrance from Dr. Arnold, was sent to Colman, in consequence of a chorus singer having been dismissed by the stage manager without his concurrence; which he considered an improper interference with his department as musical director of the theatre. It was on a point of punctilio, and the Doctor was "a little pot and soon hot." Colman, as it appears by his reply, was compelled to succumb.

"My Dear Arnold, 5th August, 1800.

"Your letter reached me this morning. It is my anxious wish, and it was last night my endeavour, in a conversation with Fawcett, to settle the business in question pleasantly to all parties, but, alas! I have not succeeded. I much lament that a trifling circumstance should occasion so much misunderstanding, and that my attempts as a peace-maker, have been received with so much heat.

"Fisher shall continue in his situation, and I see no impropriety in your sending a letter to Jewell to give him notice of the man's re-instatement; but let me clear up one mistake. Fawcett was originally commissioned by me to discharge Fisher; for, on being simply told that a chorus singer had sent a substitute to perform his business, I held it proper to dismiss him upon the general principle (on which we were both long ago agreed) of suffering no person engaged in the theatre to do their work by deputy. Your subsequent explanation convinced me that Fisher is worthy of consideration, and he is re-established.

I am, my dear Arnold, very truly your's,

G. Colman."

"P. S.—I shall be at the theatre to-morrow evening between eight and nine. Shall I see you there?"

General Fawcett again took the command of the Haymarket troops in 1801, under Field-Marshal Colman; Mrs. Litchfield from Covent Garden, and Powell from Drury Lane, were added to the excellent company. On the 24th of July, a musical entertainment was brought out, entitled 'The Gipsy Prince,' and Kelly (who composed the music) appeared as the hero; Mrs. Mountain and Miss Tyrer were the principal vocalists. On the 29th, Farley produced a grand ballet romance, called 'The Corsair; or, the Italian Nuptials.' H. Johnston, Farley, Menage, and Miss Bell Menage, figured in this pantomime. The music was arranged by the Stock Composer, Dr. Arnold. Without any other novelty, the season proved abundantly profitable, Obi and The Review being very frequently repeated.

The Haymarket season of 1802, was rather unsuccessful: a three-act comedy, entitled 'Beggar my Neighbour,' and which has been laid at Morton's door, failed under the displeasure it excited. A farce, by Oulton, called 'The Sixty-Third Letter,' in which Fawcett caused much laughter in the character of a footman music mad, was a successful absurdity. In this season Mr. Boaden adapted 'Le Jugement de Salomon,' by M. Caigniez, and produced it under the name of 'The Voice of Nature;' and a burletta called 'Fairy Revels,' principally performed by children, followed.

We now return to Colman's own narrative:—

"Among the vicissitudes which time has produced, I forgot to mention the striking change of manners

and fashions. Whether they have ameliorated or grown worse, let the partisans of the old and new schools determine; but, certain it is, we have little of the *vieille cour* behaviour remaining, except perhaps in some persons among the very highest circles. As to costume, a lady's hoop is not to be seen at Court—and there are scarcely six pigtails left in London. When I produced my comedy called 'The Poor Gentleman,' at Covent Garden theatre, in the year 1801, Mrs. Mattocks acted the part of Lucretia Mac Tab in the same dress which she had worn many years previously, as Lucinda, in Love in a Village; with no further alteration of it, than her having grown fatter, or thinner, might require. The gown was what is called a *sack*, with a petticoat over a large hoop. The unlearned in theatricals should be told that Lucinda is a very young spinster, and Lucretia a very old-fashioned old maid.

" It is odd that I should have known two Harveys whose callings, though so very different, caused both one and the other to be the daily and hourly witnesses of scenes which smell of mortality: the first, being the learned Leech, under whose care my father recovered from the first attack of his illness at Margate; the second, the landlord of the Black Dog, at Bedfont, commonly called by corruption Belfound; famed for his *fish-sauce*, and his knowledge and practice of cookery. I am uncertain whether he be still alive, but his well-known, and well-frequented Inn continues, I suppose, to overlook the churchyard, which is remarkable for a

couple of yews, clipped into likenesses, by no means flattering, of the beauteous birds of Juno. I once scrawled some lines at this Inn, in 1802, which I give from memory :—

LINES WRITTEN AT THE INN AT BEDFONT.

HARVEY—whose Inn commands a view
Of Bedfont's church and churchyard too,
Where yew-trees, into peacocks shorn,
In vegetable torture mourn:
Is liable no doubt to glooms,
From 'Meditations on the Tombs:'
But while he meditates, he cooks,
Thus both to quick and dead he looks;
Turning his mind to nothing, save
Thoughts on man's gravy, and his grave.
Long may he keep from churchyard holes
Our bodies, with his Sauce for *Soles!*
Long may he hinder death from beckoning
His guests to settle their last reckoning!"

At the end of the Haymarket theatrical season in 1802, Mr. Colman gave notice that on account of the Winter theatres having of late years extended their performances to an unusually late period, he must, at his next opening, request indulgence for the best company that he could possibly select from Provincial theatres. "When a royal patent," said Mr. Fawcett, who delivered the farewell address, "was about to be granted to the late Mr. Foote, it was inquired, with that justice which characterises the English throne, what annual extent of term might be allowed him, without injury to the theatrical patents then existing in the metropolis. The proprietors of the Winter theatres were interrogated on this point; and in consequence of their documents, a patent

was granted to Foote for his life, to open a theatre annually, from the 15th of May to the 15th of September inclusive. The Winter-houses never closed precisely on the commencement of his term—but Foote was *unique*, and depended chiefly on his own writing, and his own acting. A licence was given to the elder Colman, on Foote's death, for the same annual term: but being aware that he could not, like his singularly gifted predecessor, depend on his own individual powers, he engaged a regular company of comedians, chiefly selected from the winter theatres, for whose assistance he was obliged to wait till those theatres closed. He ventured in every shape very deeply on a limited privilege, which this mode of speculation rendered still more limited. The younger Colman, our present proprietor, succeeded his father in the licence, but bought the property, at the expense of several thousand pounds; and thus came into a theatre, where the custom of depending on the movements of the winter-houses has now curtailed his short season of nearly one-third. The object at length in view is, to remedy the evil, without invidious and vain attempts to attack much more powerful theatres, who have an undoubted privilege of acting plays all the year round. The proprietor has no intention of tiring the public ear by a querulous appeal; he admits that others have the fullest right to make their property as productive as possible: he wishes merely to follow their example, and solicits your support in his efforts for establishing a company of actors totally independent of them. There are but three

houses permitted to give you regular *batches* of plays in London; and this house (by far the most humble) sees no reason, when they will all be *making their bread*, on the 15th of May, why even *three* of a trade should not perfectly agree. Should his arrangements succeed, which are, even at this early period, actively forming, you will, on the re-opening of the theatre, greet the return to London of some favourites, who, it is trusted, will find no diminution of your protection. You will witness new and rising merit, which it is your marked practice to foster. There is no theatrical town in the United Kingdom which will not be resorted to, in the hope of procuring you its choicest produce; and, in addition to other authors, you will be entreated early in the season, to show your indulgence to the proprietor's further attempts at dramatic composition; whose pen, he humbly hopes, notwithstanding the long duration of your encouragement, is not yet quite worn out in your service."

This statement was received throughout with frequent marks of approbation; and concluded amidst loud and long continued applause.

CHAPTER X.

1802—1808.

Letter to Dr. Arnold—Proposal to Mathews the York comedian—Engagement of Mathews at the Haymarket—Colman visits York—Tate Wilkinson—Superannuated Company—John Bull produced at Covent Garden—Haymarket opened with the new scheme—Mathews—Elliston—S. J. Arnold—Colman disposes of part of the Theatre—The Tailors—Serious Riot—Liston's first appearance—We Fly by Night—Bannister's Budget—His liberality to Colman—Young—Theodore Hook—The Critic—Mathews's Sir Fretful Plagiary—Leigh Hunt—The Marvellous Physicians—Mrs. Inchbald—Anger of Colman—Correspondence.

In the September of this year (1802) Colman wrote the subjoined letter to Dr. Arnold, who had been suffering from illness.

To Dr. Arnold.

"My Dear Arnold, 15th October, 1802.

"I blush on recurring to the date of your last letter, 30th September, while I am sitting down to answer it to-day. You say 'you trust you are getting better,' and I truly hope the confidence you expressed in your convalescence, when you wrote to me, has been daily strengthening. We are all *croakers* when we are ill; and when I last saw you, I thought you were giving way a little too much to low spirits. For Heaven's sake, if the blue devils pay you a visit, kick them out of your doors as fast as you can. I

know the malignity of their influence; for, about eight years ago, in co-operation with a relaxation of the system, they gave me, what is vulgarly called, *a squeak for my life*, and when, by summoning my resolution, I got rid of them, I wondered why I had been so frightened; and was convinced that they had constituted two-thirds of a disorder which had assumed a very serious aspect.

"Now to something in the shape of business, which, if there be not too much of it, may do you more good than harm, by abstracting you, *pro tempore*, from your ailments.

"Mr. Second has written a most *condescending* letter on the subject of his wife,* which I have put in the fire! and the only answer he will receive to it is my advertisement in the newspapers, which says to all who it may concern, that if I do not answer in ten days, I shall not answer at all. In respect to choruses, band, &c. much is to be done. I have a particular application, from a friend to whom I wish to attend, in respect to a performer on the harpsichord; of that hereafter, but I may probably in a day or two give him a line of introduction to you. If he have merit, I shall thank you to consider him; if he have none, or not sufficient for our purpose, shew him no favour on my score.

"I have a good deal to say to you on private business also. In the course of a week, perhaps sooner, I shall be at your door. But I am so perplexed with, at least *three* different pursuits of consequence, which are all pressing upon me at once, that I cannot fix a day.

God bless you, my dear friend,
affectionately and truly yours,
G. COLMAN."

The following letter was addressed by Colman to Mathews while he was at York, in pursuance of his plan of raising a *corps dramatique* from the Provinces:

* Mrs. Second, a *third*-rate singer, at the period.

" Theatre Royal, Haymarket,

" Sir, 14th September, 1802.

" Your merits as an actor having been mentioned to me, give me leave to propose an engagement to you for next year in my theatre. It is my intention to commence the season positively on the 15th of next May; and to continue it to the 15th of the following September. Should you think it eligible to embrace the opportunity which I now offer to you, of performing for four months before a London audience, I beg you will be kind enough to inform me on what terms you will give me your assistance. At all events, I shall thank you for a speedy answer, directed to me, at Mr. Jewell's, 26, Suffolk-street, Charing Cross.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

G. Colman."

Several letters passed between them, and Mathews demanded the salary of ten pounds per week. Colman's reply is annexed.

" Sir, Suffolk-street, October 8, 1802.

" The terms which you have proposed are certainly high, and perhaps unprecedented, for a performer who has not yet felt the pulse of a London audience; but the reasons stated for thus fixing your *ultimatum* appear to be founded on justice, to put vanity out of question. I wave, therefore, all mention of any risk incurred on my part in my new speculation, and embrace your offer. But to prevent all mistakes, permit me to state precisely what I conceive to be the engagement. Ten pounds a week and a benefit, of which benefit you pay the usual charges. You will perform from the 15th May to the 15th September inclusive. If you engage in London after your appearance with me, you give me the preference in a re-engagement. If you think any short legal memorandum requisite between us, I am willing to enter into it. If you conceive the letters that pass between us as suffi-

cient, I am quite content that it should remain an agreement *upon honour*. Pray send me two lines, speedily, which will be conclusive. I will, when we meet in the summer, do everything in my power to contribute to your reputation with the public, and your comfort in my theatre.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. COLMAN."

"P. S.—Of course your attendance will be expected in town a week or ten days previously to opening the theatre, as I begin with novelties."

Mathews accepted the engagement, but expressed great anxiety as to a judicious choice of a character in which he might appear before the awful tribunal of a London audience, and inquired whether Mr. Colman positively intended to open with new pieces? Colman wrote in reply the following characteristic epistle.

"DEAR SIR, October 23, 1802.

"I am happy to find by your last letter of the 13th that our agreement is completed. You see by the date of this that I take the latitude you offer, when you desire me to inform you of my plans for the opening of the theatre 'at leisure.'

"To give you this information (which I will as well as I now can, for you must naturally be anxious) I send you a parcel of crude hints and disjointed sentences, rather than a perfect system; but from these you will be able to make out a sketch of my general intentions. I will endeavour to be more particular in what most immediately regards yourself. Recollect, however, that there are secrets in the most petty theatrical states, and that I send you the outline of my scheme in confidence.

"New matter, as fast as possible, after the commence-

ment of the season. Certainly an occasional prelude on the first night. A new grand ballet of action almost immediately on the opening. A new light drama (of dialogue) to add to it, after a few nights of its run. New matter to follow the above sooner or later, in proportion as the preceding novelties may hit or miss. The prelude I shall write myself, and shall endeavour to cast in it, or leave out of it, such new performers whose reputation might be served or hurt, by appearing thus abruptly (for the first time) before a London audience. New actors, of whatever merit, cannot expect to be nursed so much, by giving intervals in their appearances, when they come into an established London company. The scheme is new; almost all the actors are new. If we wait for niceties the stage will stand still; off we must go at once! ding dong! helter skelter! and the new troops must commence regular action like the veterans. Now, let us see how this plan will militate against you, premising that I wish to do the best for you which such an undertaking will permit, and that I wish you to suggest anything to me which you think will contribute to your fame. The prelude you may be in, or out of, as you please. I think certainly better out; for as I wish to make you a great gun, it would be a pity to let you off like a squib, in a prelude, at first. When I say this, you need not fear having original characters enough (just as they may turn out, for that rests with the town), in the course of the season. The ballet on the opening, if it succeed, will be a favourable circumstance for you, for it will supply the place of many a light speaking drama (into which you will naturally afterwards be thrown), and give you breathing time. You will not thus be hurried from one character to another night after night, as if the arrangement were otherwise. Here I begin to perceive, from the length of my letter, that I shall put you to the charge of double postage, but I shall make no apology; for, as you have unwittingly sold yourself to a Turk of a manager, I dare say you would

willingly give half-a-crown to know what the tyrant means to do with you.

"Let me now consider your first appearance. It must be immediately on the opening; but it shall be in whatever character you please. This is a subject which requires deliberation, and we have no time to deliberate. You tell me that you have performed in the York theatre the entire range of low comedy! This is a very wide range, indeed! But tell me also, in which part of that range you feel yourself to have succeeded most with the audience. Old men, country boys, dapper servants, mingled characters, like those of Munden, of sentiment and fun, &c. In short, make out a list of what you like, and send it to me. I would advise you to avoid, if possible, in your first appearance, the difficulty (it is a great one to avoid) of encountering comparison.

"First impressions often make or mar. I remember, soon after Munden's first appearance in London, he ate, with uncommon success, a hundred pounds weight of plum-pudding in 'Two Strings to your Bow.' This feat was new to a London audience. He had a good character in it, in which nobody had been seen before. Do you recollect anything in which you might make your appearance, under the same favourable circumstances? When you have recovered from the fatigue of reading this ('tis worse than a part of twenty lengths), send me a line. Be assured, that from the reports I have heard of your merits, and from the candid, clear, manly style of your letters to me, I have your interests, abstracted from my own, fully at heart.

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

G. COLMAN."

Mrs. Mathews * relates that, "in March 1803, Mr. Colman, accompanied by his son, Captain

* In her very amusing Memoirs of her husband, Charles Mathews.

George Colman, arrived in York; probably induced by an anxiety to see the actor he had taken upon trust, and to satisfy himself, as he hoped to do, that his blind bargain was not likely to prove a lame one. Here commenced a friendship between Mr. Colman and Mr. Mathews, which never suffered a moment's interruption. During Mr. Colman's stay in York, he and his son supped nightly with the young actor at the close of the performance; and it would have been difficult on these occasions, when they separated, to determine which felt most pleased with the other; so that when the manager returned to London he was prepared to welcome a friend, whom he had every expectation, at the same time, of establishing as a favourite with the town. In short, he was immediately impressed with Mr. Mathews's talents, both on and off the stage; and those who have experienced the fascination of Mr. Colman's society, may, without difficulty, understand how completely he charmed his new acquaintance. Mr. Mathews's application for an engagement for his intended wife was answered with cordial kindness. So pleased, indeed, was Mr. Colman with the comedian, that had he been asked to engage his whole family, the request, I believe, would have been complied with: Mr. Mathews, however, had taken his future manager to see the young lady perform Harriet in the Guardian, and she was immediately engaged.

"As might be expected, Mr. Tate Wilkinson's gentleman-like feeling and hospitable habits were displayed on the arrival of this distinguished visitor,

to whom, notwithstanding he came to rob him of his trump card, he could not omit those attentions which a resident is expected to offer to strangers. Although he was at the time much more than usually an invalid, he requested Mr. Colman and his son, the Captain, to dine with him every day during their stay.

" On the first visit there was scarcely more than a family party, Mr. Mathews and Mr. Cummins being the only persons invited to meet them; and it was an early dinner, in order to allow the two actors time to dress for their evening duties. Mr. Colman, who was desirous of enlisting some more recruits for his opening campaign, was naturally inquisitive as to who and what he might expect to see during his short stay, and asked for the bill of fare for the evening, this being the first opportunity of seeing the York performers. He was told the play was to be the School for Scandal. The London manager was pleased at this, and eagerly inquired what sort of *Charles* they had? for at the time he wanted a dashing actor in that line. His attention was directed to a respectable gentleman who sat opposite to him, who had mumbled his dinner, and whose well powdered head had a cauliflower appearance, and his face the visible impress of sixty winters, ' Mr. Cummins is the *Charles*,' said Tate. Mr. Cummins bowed to Mr. Colman with the precision of the old school, in confirmation of the manager's statement. Mr. Colman started, bowed in return, with an unnatural grin of courtesy, and then took a pinch of snuff in nervous haste.

" After a short pause, however, being desirous to do away the appearance of the embarrassed surprise he was too conscious of having shown, Mr. Colman made inquiries as to the ladies of the theatre. Paul and Virginia was mentioned as one of the pieces to be performed in the course of his visit, and he caught at this information in order to ask who was to play *Virginia* (expecting, as he afterwards told Mr. Mathews, that his intended wife, to whom he had been introduced in the morning, would be named); but his attention was directed again to one of the party present, and he was informed that 'Mrs. John,' so Mrs. J. Wilkinson was always called, would personify the youthful heroine. This lady was a bulky matron, who certainly had once been young, and still was handsome. Mr. Colman at the first glance again started, and again resorted to the friendly aid of his snuff box, fairly thrown off his balance. At length, turning round with something like an angry feeling, in despair of finding much rising talent for his purpose, he whispered, 'Fore gad, Mathews, yours is a superannuated company.'

On this occasion, Mr. Colman read the comedy of John Bull, which was on the point of being got up at York, Tate requesting as a favour that the author would give the performers the advantage of his instructions in their several characters, by reading the play in the green-room. This, indeed, proved a treat: those who were to act in the comedy, and those who were not, alike enjoyed it. It is for those only who have experienced the delight of

hearing Mr. Colman read his dramatic productions, to guess the pleasure with which his perfect representation of every character was listened to by the performers; proving that one of the best dramatists of his day might also have been one of the finest actors."

On Colman's return to London, he, in the following month, forwarded a *reminder* to Mathews.

" DEAR MATHEWS, April 30.

" I send you a hasty scrawl to put your mind at ease. I am most fully sensible that you are anxious to be just to all parties; therefore, do not permit any qualms of conscience on my account to embarrass you, while you are making your public bow to the good folks at York on the 7th of May. The sooner, however, you can be with me after that period, the better for our mutual interests. Write me a line by return of post, to say if I may hope to see you on the 10th. We can settle nothing relative to your *début* till we meet, and be assured that I will press nothing upon you that is repugnant to your feelings. Make my compliments to Mrs. Mathews. George sends his remembrances to you, and begs me to assure you, spite of your calumnies, that he has not been *drunk* above seven nights in the week since we parted from you at Tadcaster. Adieu. Rely on my being warmly interested in your success in London, and believe me sincerely yours,

G. COLMAN.

" P.S.—Don't take off Suett again till we meet."

On the 5th of March, 1803, the most popular of George Colman's plays, 'John Bull, or an Englishman's Fireside,' was produced at Covent Garden. The unbounded humour of Dennis Brulgruddery

and Dan, the honest energy of Job Thornberry, the pathos, moral efficacy, character, and contrast that pervaded this comedy, immediately caused it to become an universal favourite. It was acted most admirably, and had a great run—forty-seven nights!

On the 16th May, 1803, Colman opened with a new company, almost exclusively strangers to the London boards. The performances were, a Prelude, called 'No Prelude,' with the 'Jew,' and the 'Agreeable Surprise,' in which the inimitable Mathews made his first appearance before a London audience, and enacted Jabel in the comedy, and Lingo in the farce; and exhibited such talents as at once established him as a favourite with the town. Colman also engaged Elliston from Bath, to take the stage management, and the lead as an actor. The new and hazardous scheme was infinitely indebted for its success to Elliston's enterprising spirit, and the promptitude and versatility of his professional abilities. His performance of Octavian was greatly admired and followed; and the failure of 'The Iron Chest,' with Kemble in Sir Edward Mortimer at Drury Lane, and its success when Elliston played that character at the Haymarket, was a circumstance that did the young tragedian essential service. We never were of opinion that the condemnation of the Iron Chest was owing entirely to the bad acting of Mr. Kemble; but, however this may be, the play, which *died* on the third or fourth night at Drury Lane, was revived by the skill and animation of Mr. Elliston, and he enjoys all the fame of having restored it to life again.

It would appear that their Majesties took an interest in Colman's scheme of an independent company; for the performances of the first night were repeated on the second by Royal command; and, within a fortnight after, the royal visits to the theatre had been thrice repeated; though nine years had elapsed since the Haymarket had been so honoured. We suppose, however, that either the performers on the whole did not please the public, or such as were successful procured engagements in the winter theatres; for after that season the plan was abandoned, and the Haymarket manager again awaited the breaking up of the winter companies, from which to form his own.

Mrs. Goodall, the Floranthe of The Mountaineers when Kemble acted Octavian, returned this season to the Haymarket.

A farce from the pen of Allingham, entitled 'Mrs. Wiggins,' though it encountered a severe storm the first night, was afterwards successful, and convulsed the audience with laughter. The whole affair was on the shoulders of Mathews, and it was of infinite service to him with the public. Under the name of Arthur Griffinhoofe, the Manager produced a merry farce, called 'Love Laughs at Locksmiths,' adapted from a French piece, entitled *Une Folie*. It was well acted by Mathews, Elliston, Grove, &c.; and Mr. Boaden brought out a drama called 'The Maid of Bristol.'

Mathews was very anxious at this time that his friend Young should make his appearance in London, and endeavoured to negotiate an engagement for the

following season at the Haymarket, to which the subsequent note from Colman, alludes.

" My Dear Mathews, Dec. 23rd, 1803.

" If I were to disclaim my antipathy to pen, ink, and paper, nobody would believe me. Heaven help all Epistolaries, from St. Paul to the Corinthians down to Lord Chesterfield to his son. Could anything make me write, your very pleasant letter would goad me. But,

" This is no answer, thou unfeeling man!"

In short, I cannot answer you in less than a week, for your question relative to Mr. Young involves a point which circumstances will not permit me yet to explain. Beg Mr. Young to allow me a week or ten days to elapse before he concludes an engagement; at the end of which time, my dear Mathews, you shall hear from me most fully, and then, 'were I tedious as a Prince, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.'

With regard, yours
Most sincerely,
G. Colman."

Mathews was still solicitous respecting an engagement for Young, which tardily produced another epistle from the Manager of the Little Theatre.

" Suffolk-street, Charing Cross, Jan. 9, 1804.

" My Dear Mathews,

" You have chosen a curious correspondent in me, to gratify your passion for letter reading. 'Tis like a drunkard inviting himself to a Mussulman's dinner, where there is no wine. I now write some days later than my promise. Indolence, however, has not swayed me in this instance; I have been incapable of answering a main point in your letter

sooner. It is with much regret I answer it now, by saying I must, for the present at least, relinquish Mr. Young's offer of assistance. Elliston's engagement with me still extends to two seasons. This circumstance, and the limited scale of both business and expenses in the Haymarket (and since the receipt of your letter I have been looking minutely into expenses for next summer), form a bar to my wish of treating with him. Pray present my best thanks to him for his proposal, and if in the engagements he may immediately form he should keep the Haymarket in view, and not bind himself for a long time elsewhere, it may ultimately perhaps tend to our mutual advantage. You are by no means the only 'ghost', whose word I should take for a thousand pounds from whom I have heard of his merit.

"I begin a little to doubt the good taste of your Liverpool managers. I hear they brought you out in Pedrillo, a vile part surely, for the *début* of a man who is to make a splash. All actors call it an up-hill part, but I think it is up mountain. If, however, our 'Love and Locksmiths' pleased them, it is more than it did the good folks at Covent Garden. I did not see it, but I am told it was almost marred, except Emery's Solomon Lob, which they tell me was excellent. Almost all the rest was 'filthy dowlas;' even my friend Fawcett, I hear (excellent actor as he is), was not so happy as usual. They who had seen the piece at the Haymarket, attributed its want of effect to the bungling mode of getting it up, and we triumph most decidedly by the comparison.

"You ask me if I am writing. I am like the puppet-show man, 'just going to begin,' a comedy. Alas! alas! with my antipathy to pen and ink, what have I to endure, before I have the pleasure of meeting you! For my own sake, if not for yours, I shall endeavour at something which may please you, and be effective in your hands.

"Whenever you are at leisure (if it be not too impudent a request for a professed bad answerer), scribble a few lines

to me. I shall always be happy to hear from you. Any intelligence of your proceedings and welfare will be interesting, my dear Mathews, to yours, very truly,

G. COLMAN."

It does not appear that Colman produced any thing but an epilogue or two in this year. Elliston was the stage manager of the little theatre, and commenced that practice, for which he was afterwards so remarkable, the frequent and uncalled for appeals to the audience.

The following odd letter from Colman to S. J. Arnold deserves insertion :

" Tuesday Evening.

" ' If you will buckle *ruin* on your back,' e'en take the song, altered as I send it to you.

" I do not care two pence, on my own account, whether it is hissed or no, but I should be very sorry if I brought a clamour upon your piece. Remember! you volunteer—you solicit the peril. *I only beg that the song may now be sung as I have altered it, or* NOT AT ALL; *and that it may be printed in the books, sold in the lobby,* AS IT IS SUNG. This is my only, but decided stipulation. From the very bottom of my soul, I wish you every support and success that your fondest hopes can cherish.

Truly yours,

G. C."

" P.S.—This will be with you by eleven, at latest, to-morrow. I could not transmit it to you sooner. Mathews is quick, and I doubt not will be perfect.

" To Samuel Arnold, Esq.

(" If Mr. Arnold should not be at the theatre, Mr. Elliston is requested to open this letter.")

This enclosed a song intended to be comic, to be studied and sung on the same or following evening by Mathews. It was studied, though very imperfectly sung, and *was* most outrageously hissed. It described a traveller with *carrotty locks*, who popping his head out early in the morning on the gallery of a London inn to call the chambermaid, so frightened her by the sight of his red head, that she screamed out 'Fire, fire!' and alarmed all the sleeping inmates, who rushed out in their shirts to ascertain the extent of the danger.

Elliston took his benefit this year at the Opera House. The performances were Pizarro, and Love Laughs at Locksmiths. Upon this occasion the public broke in, many hundreds not paying at all, though a collection took place after they were in the pit.

Colman now disposed of part of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, to his brother-in-law, Mr. Morris, Mr. Winston, and an attorney of the name of Tahourdine. The play-going public had this year to lament the loss of Suett the comedian, who died at the age of 47. The summer season of 1805 was remarkable for a personal fracas between Mathews and Elliston, on the latter accusing Mathews of not having done his best in a character in a new comedy, written by Cherry, entitled The Village, or the World's Epitome. Mathews retorted, that all concerned had done their duty equally well with Mr. Elliston, and some even better. Elliston gave the disagreeable negative to this, which is never mentioned to ears polite, and received from Mathews a

staggering blow. After some time, a reconciliation took place between them, through the mediation of Warner Phipps, Esq. and Sir John Carr.

This fracas had scarcely blown over, when Dowton announced for his benefit Foote's Tailors, or a Tragedy for Warm Weather! This announcement created a sensation amongst the operatives of the thimble, and letters were poured in, threatening destruction to the theatre. As soon as Dowton presented himself as Francisco, a large pair of shears was thrown at him. He immediately offered twenty pounds reward for the apprehension of the offender, but the assembled tailors were firm, and the riot commenced. A mob assembled in front of the theatre, and Mr. Aaron Graham, principal magistrate of the Bow Street office, was sent for. He soon arrived with the police, but finding that his force was not strong enough, he dispatched a message to the officer of the Horse Guards. The dragoons immediately arrived and cleared the crowd, which had by this time considerably increased. Mr. Graham took sixteen agitating tailors in the theatre into custody, who were held to bail in fifty pounds each, with two sureties in forty pounds.

Thus ended this tragedy, from which we turn with pleasure to the acmé of the comic, for Liston—*the* Liston—made his first appearance on the 15th of June, 1805, in the character of Sheepface, in the Village Lawyer.

The season of 1806 tended to increase the popularity of Elliston, Mathews, and Liston, and it was always a pleasing circumstance to the public, when

the period of the year arrived that the doors of the little theatre in the Haymarket were thrown open. Mathews had given, for the first time in public, on his benefit night, some specimens of his powers of ventriloquy. By the following letter from Colman, it is evident that it was a successful and attractive effort.

"My Dear Mathews, August 26th, 1806.

"I am dreadfully gravelled on this conclusion of the season for want of new matter; and as it is occasioned in some measure from the dulness of my own muse (which has shirked me in my efforts to finish my farce), I feel that I owe the more to my partners to do all that can be done during the remainder of our term. Will you, under these circumstances, repeat your ventriloquy on Saturday? As I am thrown out of the intended play, it will be of service.

"Truly yours,
G. Colman."

Colman produced this year his pleasant farce, entitled 'We Fly by Night.'

The following trait of Jack Bannister in 1807, which redounds highly to the credit and character of the latter, is recorded by Colman:

"After having slaved at some dramatic composition, I forget what, I had resolved to pass one entire week in luxurious sloth. I was then so disgusted with pen, ink, and paper, that had I been an absolute monarch, with cruelty equal to my despotism, I would have made it felony for any subject who presented a petition to me written with, or upon, any stationer's ware whatsoever.

"At this crisis, just as I was beginning the first

morning's sacrifice upon the altar of my darling goddess, indolence, enter Jack Bannister with a huge manuscript under his left arm! This he told me, consisted of loose materials for an entertainment with which he meant to 'skir the country,' under the title of 'Bannister's Budget;' but unless I reduced the chaos into some order for him, and that instantly, he should lose his tide, and with it his emoluments for the season. In such a case, there was no balancing between two alternatives, so I deserted my darling goddess to drudge through the week for my old companion. To concoct the crudities he had brought me by polishing, expunging, adding, in short almost rewriting them, was, it must be confessed, labouring under the 'horrors of digestion;' but the toil was completed at the week's end, and away went Jack Bannister into the country with his Budget.

"Several months afterwards, he returned to town, and I inquired, of course, what success? so great he answered, that, in consequence of the gain which had accrued to him through my means, and which he was certain would still accrue, as he now conconsidered 'The Budget' to be an annual income for some years to come, he must insist upon cancelling a bond which I had given him for money he had lent to me. I was astounded, for I had never dreamed of fee or reward. To prove that he was in earnest, I extract a paragraph from a letter which he wrote from Shrewsbury to me:—

"'For fear of accidents, I think it necessary to inform you

that Fladgate, your attorney, is in possession of your bond to me of £.700. As I consider it fully discharged, it is proper you should have this acknowledgment under my hand.

J. B.'

"Should my unostentatious friend think me indelicate in publishing this anecdote, I can only say, that it naturally appertains to the sketch I have given of our co-operations in life; and that the insertion of it here seems almost indispensable, in order to elucidate my previous statement of our having blended so much sentiment with so much traffic. I feel too, that it would be downright injustice to him if I suppressed it; and would betoken in myself, the pride of those narrow-minded persons who are ashamed of acknowledging how greatly they have profited by the liberal spirit of others.

"The bond above mentioned was given, be it observed, on a private account; not for money due to an actor for his professional assistance. Gilliland, in his 'Dramatic Mirror,' says, that my admission of partners 'enabled the proprietors to completely liquidate all the demands which had for some time past involved the house in temporary embarrassments.' This is a gross mistake, the Haymarket theatre was never embarrassed, on the contrary, it was a prosperous speculation, while under my direction. My own difficulties during part of this time are another matter.

"In 'The Budget,' I have so much altered some of the songs, that they might almost be called my own. I do not arrogate to myself the merit of

having improved them so much as Sir John Cutler mended his worsted stockings, till he darned them into silk; and if I plead guilty of having had a hand in the texture, let the primary manufacturers remember, that I have left enough of their own stuff to convict them as partakers of the crime."

The Summer Season of 1807 commenced on the 15th of June. During the interval the Haymarket theatre had been newly decorated, and the pit enlarged by taking away some unnecessary space before the proscenium. Colman was fortunate this year in the engagement of Mr. Charles Young from Manchester, who proved himself for many succeeding years an actor of sterling merit, a perfect gentleman in his manners, and a most delightful companion in private life; Mr. Young was indeed an honour to his profession. He played during the short summer campaign, the parts of Hamlet, Don Felix, Osmond, Sir Edward Mortimer, Rolla, Hotspur, Petruchio, Gondibert, The Stranger, Harry Dornton, besides new characters in some ephemeral dramas.

Mrs. Litchfield was also added to Colman's company, and from her capability of sustaining a variety of parts, was of essential service to him. We also find the names of Fawcett, Mathews, Liston, De Camp, Chapman, Taylor, Mrs. Grove, Noble, Palmer, Junr. Waddy, Bennet (a Bath singer), &c. Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Mathews, Mrs. Liston, Mrs. Powell, in this excellent summer theatre.

Mr. Theodore Hook produced this season two successful pieces, 'The Fortress,' and 'Music Mad,' in both of which he was aided by the compositions of his father.

The revival of the Critic was very attractive this year; the characters of Puff, Fawcett; Sir Fretful Plagiary, Mathews; Don Ferolo, Liston; and Tilburina, Mrs. Liston—all admirably sustained.

The care and skill of Mathews in his representation of Sir Fretful, was of infinite service to his name as an actor. Leigh Hunt was so struck with the performance, that he spoke of it thus—"We are generally satisfied when an actor can express a single feeling with strength of countenance; but to express two at once, and to give them at the same time a powerful distinctness, belongs to the perfection of his art. Nothing can be more admirable than the look of Mr. Mathews, when the severe criticism is detailed by his malicious acquaintance. While he affects a pleasantry of countenance, he cannot help betraying his rage in his eyes, in that feature which always displays our most predominant feelings; if he draws the air to and fro through his teeth, as if he was perfectly assured of his own pleasant feelings, he convinces every body by his tremulous and restless limbs that he is in absolute torture; if the lower part of his face expands into a painful smile, the upper part contracts into a glaring frown which contradicts the ineffectual good humour beneath; every thing in his face becomes rigid, confused, and uneasy; it

is a mixture of oil and vinegar, in which the acid predominates; it is anger putting on a mask that is only the more hideous in proportion as it is more fantastic. The sudden drop of his smile into a deep and bitter indignation, when he can endure sarcasm no longer, completes this impassioned picture of Sir Fretful: but lest his indignation should swell into mere tragedy, Mr. Mathews accompanies it with all the touches of familiar vexation: while he is venting his rage in vehement expressions, he accompanies his more emphatic words with a closing thrust of his buttons, which he fastens and unfastens up and down his coat; and when his obnoxious friend approaches his snuff-box to take a pinch, he claps down the lid and turns violently off with a most malicious mockery of grin. These are the performances and the characters, which are the true fame of actors and dramatists. If our farcical performers and farcical writers could reach this refined satire, ridicule would vanish before them, like breath from a polished knife.*"

In the beginning of the year 1808, Colman commenced a paper war with Mrs. Inchbald, who at the period had undertaken to edit a series of plays, under the title of the British Theatre. Colman had been nettled by the criticism of this lady on 'The Heir at Law,' and prefixed to a new edition of his comedy the following letter:

* Critical Essays on the Performers of 'The London Theatres,' by Leigh Hunt, 1807.

To Mrs. Inchbald.

" MADAM,

" When I lately sold the copyright of the Heir at Law, with two or three other dramatic manuscripts, I required permission to publish any prefatory matter, which might appear eligible to me, in the first genuine impression of the plays in question. I had reason to suppose that they would be put forth in a series of dramas, with ' Critical Remarks' by Mrs. Inchbald. On this account I more particularly urged my *postulatum.* I make no apology for writing Latin to you, madam, for as a scholiast, you doubtless understand it, like the learned Madame Dacier, your predecessor.

" Did not the opportunity thus occur of addressing you, did it not absolutely fall in my way, I should have been silent, but as your critique on the present play will probably go hand in hand with this letter, I would say a little relative to those dramas of mine which have already had the honour to be somewhat singed in passing the fiery ordeal of feminine fingers; fingers which it grieves me to see destined to a rough task, from which your manly contemporaries in the drama would naturally shrink.

" Achilles, when he went into petticoats, must have made an awkward figure among the females; but the delicate Deidamia never wielded a battle-axe to slay and maim the gentlemen.

" My writings (if they deserve the name) are replete with error; but, dear madam, why would you not apply to me? I should have been as zealous to save you trouble as a beau to pick up your fan. I could have easily pointed to twenty of my blots, in the right places, which have escaped you in the labour of discovering one in the wrong.

" But, madam, I tire you. A word or two first for my late father; then for myself, and I have done. In your criticism

upon the Jealous Wife, a sterling comedy, which must live on the English stage till taste and morality expire, you say, that after this play, 'it appears Mr. Colman's talents for dramatic writing failed, or at least his ardour abated.' Fye on these bitters, madam, which you sprinkle with honey! Whether his talent did or did not fail, I presume to say not, is no point in question, but you have gone out of the way to assert it; mixing *ad libitum*, the biographer with the critic. Oh! madam! is this grateful? is it graceful from an ingenious lady, who was originally encouraged, and brought forward, as an authoress, by that very man on whose tomb she idly plants this poisonous weed of remark, to choke the laurels which justly grace his memory.

"As to the history of my father's writing the Clandestine Marriage, jointly with Mr. Garrick; it is a pity, since you choose to enter into it, that you had not proceeded to all the inquiry within your reach, instead of trusting to vague report or your own conjecture. I should have been gratified, madam, in giving you every information on that subject, which I have received from my father's lips; and you have no reason, I trust, to suspect that I should desert from his known veracity.

"How happened, madam, this omission of your duty to your publishers and the public?

"As to my own trifling plays, which you have done me the honour to notice, allow me merely to ask a few questions:—

"Inkle and Yarico.—Pray, madam, why is it an 'important fault' to bring Yarico from America instead of Africa; when Ligon (whence the story in the Spectator is taken) records the circumstance as a fact.* Pray, madam, why

* Yarico is not a solitary evidence to clear me from this 'important fault' of resorting to the main of America for a slave. 'As for the Indians, we have but few, and those fetched from

did you not rather observe that it is a worse fault (excusable only in the carelessness of youth) to put lions and tigers in the woods of America, and to give Wowski a Polish denomination?

"Mountaineers.—Pray, madam, why should you kill the Mountaineers with Mr. Kemble? Pray, madam, has not Octavian been acted repeatedly (though certainly never so excellently as by Mr. Kemble), to very full houses without him? Pray, madam, did you ever ask the treasurer of the Haymarket theatre this question?

"Poor Gentleman.—Pray, madam, do you mean a compliment, or rebuke, when you say this comedy exacts rigid criticism? 'not from its want of ingenuity or powers of amusement, but that both these requisites fall infinitely here below the talents of the author.' Pray, do not the subjects which present themselves to all authors, make all authors sometimes appear unequal? and when you, madam, as an author, have shown ingenuity, and powers of amusement to 'auditors and readers,' have they not been content too?

"John Bull.—You have taken him only by the tip of his horns, madam, but if Irish bog-trotters and Yorkshire clowns were (according to your prescription) to talk like gentlemen, pray, madam, might not a lady invite them very innocently some afternoon to a ball and supper?

"You really clothe your 'Remarks,' madam, in very smooth language. Permit me to take my leave in a quotation from them, with some little alteration.

"'Beauty, with all its charms, will not constitute a good

other countries, some from the neighbouring islands, some from the main, which we make slaves, &c."—*Ligon's History of Barbadoes.*

After this, it would be well for Mrs. Inchbald to reflect that it may sometimes be necessary for a critic on one book to have read another. G. C.

remarker. A very inferior dramatic critique may be in the highest degree pointed.'

I have the honour to be, Madam,
(with due limitation,)
Your admirer, and obedient Servant,
GEORGE COLMAN, the younger."

"January 1808."

Mrs. Inchbald's reply to the above letter was so admirably and modestly written, with such an arch vein of satire pervading it, that it must be confessed Colman got the worst of the argument.

To George Colman the Younger.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"As I have offended you, I take it kind that you have publicly told me so, because it gives me an opportunity thus openly to avow my regret, and at the same time to offer you all the atonement which is now in my power.

"In one of those unfortunate moments which leaves us years of repentance, I accepted an overture to write from two to four pages in the manner of preface, to be introduced before a certain number of plays, for the perusal or information of such persons as have not access to any diffuse compositions, either in biography or criticism, but who are yet very liberal contributors to the treasury of a theatre. Even for so humble a task I did not conceive myself competent, till I submitted my own opinion to that of the proprietors of the plays in question.

"To you, as an author, I have no occasion to describe the force of those commendations which come from the lips of our best patrons, the purchasers of our labour. Dr. Johnson has declared 'An author is always sure to hear truth froma bookseller, at least as far as his judgment goes; there

is no flattery.' The judgment on which I placed my reliance on this occasion was, that many readers might be amused and informed, whilst no one dramatist could possibly be offended by the cursory remarks of a female observer, upon works which had gone through various editions, had received the unanimous applause of every British theatre, and the final approbation or censure of all our learned Reviews; and that any injudicious critique of such female might involve her own reputation (as far as a woman's reputation depends on being a critic), but could not depreciate the worth of the writings upon which she gave her brief intelligence and random comments.

"One of the points of my agreement was, that I should have no control over the time or the order in which these prefaces were to be printed or published, but that I should merely produce them as they were called for, and resign all other interference to the proprietor or editor of the work. You ask me, 'Do not the subjects which present themselves to all authors, make all authors sometimes appear unequal?' I answer yes, and add, that here, in the capacity of a periodical writer, I claim indulgence upon this your interrogation, far more than you. Confined to a stated time of publication, such writers may be compelled occasionally to write in haste, in ill health, under depressed spirits, with thoughts alienated by various cares, or revolting from the subject before them. The remarks on The Mountaineers were written beneath the weight of almost all those misfortunes combined. The play was sent to the press, whilst not a sentence could my fancy suggest, which my judgment approved, to send after it. In this perplexity, recollection came to my aid, and I called to mind, and borrowed, in my necessity, your own reported words to Mr. Kemble, upon the representation of this identical drama. As I speak only of report, should your memory supply no evidence in proof of what I advance, ask yourself whether it was not probable, that on some occasion during a season

of more than hoped-for success, such acknowledgments, or nearly such, as I have intimated, might not have escaped you, towards the evident promoter of your good fortune? or if at any period of a later date, you can bring it to your remembrance the having lavished unwary compliments even on minor actors, and upon minor events, do not once doubt but that you actually declared your sentiments, to the original performer of Octavian, in eulogiums even more fervid than those which I took the liberty to repeat.

"The admiration I have for Inkle and Yarico, rendered my task here much lighter. Yet that very admiration warned me against unqualified praise, as the mere substitute for ridicule; and to beware lest suspicions of a hired panegyrist should bring disgrace upon that production which required no such nefarious help for its support. Guided by cautions such as these, I deemed it requisite to discover one fault in this excellent opera. You charge me with having invented that one which never existed, and of passing over others which blemish the work. Yet you give me no credit for this tenderness; though believe me, my dear Sir, had I exposed any faults but such as you could easily argue away, (and this in my preface, I acknowledged would be the case,)* you would have been too much offended to have addressed the present letter to me; your anger would not have been united with pleasantry, nor should I have possessed that consciousness which I now enjoy, of never having intended to give you a moment's displeasure.

"Humility, and not vanity, I know to be the cause of that sensation which my slight animadversions have excited; but this is cherishing a degree of self-contempt which I may be pardoned for never having supposed, that any of my 'manly contemporaries in the drama' could have indulged.

* See preface to Inkle and Yarico.

"Of your respected father I have said nothing that he would not approve were he living. He had too high an opinion of his own talents, to have repined under criticisms such as mine; and too much respect for other pursuits, to have blushed at being cloyed with the drama; yet you did me justice when you imagined that the mere supposition of my ingratitude to him would give me pain. This was the design meditated in your accusation; for, had I either wronged or slighted his memory, you would have spared your reproach, and not have aimed it at a heart too callous to have received the impression. But in thus acknowledging my obligations to Mr. Colman the elder, let it be understood that they amounted to no more than those usual attentions which every manager of a theatre is supposed to confer, when he first selects a novice in dramatic writing as worthy of being introduced on his stage to the public.

"I should thank you for reminding me of my duty to my employers, but that it has been the object of my care, even to the most anxious desire of minutely fulfilling the contract between us; in which, as you were not a party consulted, you cannot tell but that I might stipulate to give no other information in those prefaces, but such as was furnished me from their extensive repository of recorded facts.

"Nor did the time or space allotted me for both observations and biography (for biography of the deceased was part of my duty, and not introduced at my discretion), admit of any farther than an abridgment, or slight sketch of each.

"Your attention and wishes of having been applied to on this subject, however, give a value to these trifles, I never set on them before. The novelty of the attempt was their only hoped-for recommendation. The learned had for ages written criticism—the illiterate were now to make a trial—and this is the era of dramatic prodigies? Adventurers, sufficiently modest, can be easily enticed into

that field of speculation where singularity may procure wealth, and incapacity obtain fame.

"Permit me, notwithstanding this acquiescence in your contempt for my literary acquirements, to apprize you, that in comparing me as a critic with Madame Dacier, you have inadvertently placed yourself as an author, in the rank with Homer. I might as well aspire to write remarks on 'The Iliad,' as Dacier condescend to give comments on 'The Mountaineers.' Be that as it may, I willingly subscribe myself an unlettered woman, and as willingly yield to you all those scholastic honours which you have so excellently described in the following play.*

I am, dear Sir,

(With too much pride at having been admitted a dramatist along with the two Colmans, father and son, to wish to diminish the reputation of either)

Yours most truly and sincerely,

March, 1808. ELIZABETH INCHBALD."

* The Heir at Law.—Vide Dr. Pangloss.—ED.

CHAPTER XI.

1808–1815.

Haymarket Affairs—Plot and Counter-Plot—The Africans—Liston—Yes or No—Isaac Pocock—George Keate, F.S.A.—Effect of Fright—Tragi-Comedy—Colman's strict sense of Honor in the Rules of the Bench—D. E. Morris—Liston in Octavian — Major Downs—Colman's *Jeu d'Esprit* — Mrs. Gibbs—Sowerby—Theatrical Disputes—Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh—Darkness Visible—Travellers Benighted—Mathews —Colman at Carlton House—Chancery—Poetical Vagaries—Debut of Terry — The Sleep-Walker — Look at Home—Accident to Mathews and Terry—Harlequin Hocus-Pocus—Love and Gout—Masquerade Prologue by Colman.

THE Haymarket Theatre opened June 15th, 1808, with many alterations in the company, some of which were not considered to be for the better; Young, however, was the leading tragedian, and Fawcett, Mathews, and Liston the comic props. The first novelty in the best style and spirit of farce, was 'Plot and Counter-Plot,' translated from the French by Mr. Charles Kemble. A revival of Lillo's Fatal Curiosity followed, for the purpose of introducing Young as Old Wilmot; but as it was not tragedy weather, the audience showed very little favour at the dropping of the curtain. The piece from which the management expected the greatest success, was the 'Africans, or War, Love, and Duty.' It was the production of Mr. Colman, and certainly is far from being his best drama. He bestowed his chief labour

upon the dialogue, which is highly ornamented, and in the most vigorous style of the author; but this labour was misapplied, for the characters required the utmost simplicity of diction. This was one of the great faults of the play. There are always sufficient opportunities for a writer like Mr. Colman to show that he is a poet, but when the object is to reach the heart, he should not travel to it by a circuitous route. The Three Brothers were well represented by Young, Farley, and Fawcett; the latter played admirably, and was, doubtlessly, the great support of the piece. Henry Augustus Mug (Liston) was dragged into the play. There are boundaries even to extravagance, and when Colman planned the introduction of a vulgar cockney into Tatteconda, and made him secretary of state, he must have been astonished at his own temerity; Liston, however, was *himself alone*, his humour never failed, and the song which he had to sing to the tune of 'Will you come to the bower,' he had frequently to warble thrice.

The partial success of the Africans precluded the production of other novelties during the season, a new farce excepted, called 'First come, first served;' which was brought out for Mathews's benefit, and was attributed to Sir John Carr: and on the 31st of August, a pleasant trifle, called 'Yes, or No!' a farce by Isaac Pocock, afterwards the very successful author of 'Hit or Miss,' and of many dramatic adaptations of Sir Walter Scott's novels to the stage. 'Yes, or No!' was excellently acted by Liston, Mathews, Farley, Mrs. Davenport, and Mrs. Liston.

The subjoined letter was addressed by Colman to Mathews, with whom he had promised to dine.

"DEAR MATHEWS, November 11, 1808.

"I 'gin to pull in resolution."

"When I talked of Sunday holidays, I felt bolder than upon reflection I ought to do, with a due respect to the regulations of our college,* into which I have enquired more particularly, since we met. So another day, in the course of the month, I will, if you please, attend you, and be kind enough to look out a moon for me, for I incline to the party of the Lunatics, and am no follower of the prince of darkness on the king's highway.

"So, Sheridan and Hood for ever! No Paull! God save the King! Bless the crier! Huzza, Huzza!

G. COLMAN."

The following ludicrous anecdote of Mr. George Keate, a friend of his father, is related by Colman. Mr. Keate, whom we have previously mentioned, was the editor of an interesting account of the wreck of the Antelope on the Pellew Islands, and of Prince Lee-Boo, who was brought thence into this country, where he died. "Mr. Keate's countenance," says Colman, "was more grotesquely ugly than the generality of human faces; for some time, I wondered what freak of Nature could have made it so, till I heard him tell my father that Nature's frolic had been materially seconded by accident: he had been at a play, in a side box of one of the London theatres, when there

* By the college, Colman meant the King's Bench Prison, in the rules of which he then and for many after years resided.

was a cry of ' fire,' ' I was excessively frightened,' said Mr. Keate; ' so much so, indeed, that when I had got home, and, thanks to Providence, had escaped, though the alarm was a false one, I found that my eye-brows and eye-lashes had dropped off, through apprehension; and they never, as you may perceive, Sir, have grown again.' I have heard much of the effects of fear, such as the hair standing on end, and even turning grey on the sudden, but of its causing eye-brows and eye-lashes instantly to vanish, in the side box of a theatre, unless they were false ones, and shaken off in a squeeze to get out, I never before or since met with an example. The gravity with which Mr. Keate told this story, and the ruefulness of his bald wooden visage gave me much pain, from the difficulty of suppressing a vulgar and uproarious horse laugh.

" Having finished his history, he began a subject much more doleful, by pulling from his pocket a manuscript play of his own writing, and asking my father (Oh horror!) to let him read it to him: the proposition was waived; but the author expressed his doubts whether he should announce his work as a production of pleasantry or woe, for it partook of both. Mr. Keate was F.R.S. and S.A.

" My father related, that a certain Lord B——, of former times, had finished a play, and, as it was upon a mixed story, he consulted his father, who was primate of Ireland, whether he should call it a tragedy or comedy; ' Murra, murra!' said the primate, ' call it a tragedy, for it is a dismal piece!' In this tragedy there were the following lines:

" And so, without any more ifs or ands,
He jump'd from off the cliffs upon the sands;"

which the author generously expressed, in a note, his willingness to alter, if required, into

" And so, without any more ands or ifs,
He jump'd from off the sands upon the cliffs!"

In this work was, also, extant

" So when a huntsman goeth out to hawk,
He finds two filberts growing on one stalk;
He cracks the one, and finding it unsound,
Concludes the other so, though lying on the ground;
So Amaryllis, born of mother chaste,
She to be pure must hold her honour fast."

N.B.—In the same play, the king having ordered a slave's ears to be cut off, the slave roars, and the attendant tells the king that the sufferer is

" In great grief and pain;"

upon which the king, touched with compassion, cries out,

" Give him, Oh! give him, both his ears again!"

When Colman was in the rules (and Dubois said that he only staid there to prove by a practical joke, that he could be kept within them), he lived in the last house of the rules towards Westminster, which however he left suddenly, and gave this reason for his departure. The staircase had a window looking out of the rules, and he said " that after one of his nightly symposiums, he was afraid in going to bed, he might fall out of this window, and so fix his bail." Honour, therefore, made him retreat: all retreats are not of that character.

An old acquaintance of Colman, related a whimsical anecdote respecting the rivalry of David

Morris, Colman's brother-in-law. Colman has recorded of himself, that he affected at one period, in dress, that which we degenerate moderns have designated the dandy-cut, the exquisite, but then known as the Macaroni style. Whenever Colman mounted a new suit, Morris, who was a dashing young man, went to his tailor, and had one made exactly like it; he had his hair, too, dressed, precisely in Colman's fashion. So closely did Morris think it necessary to look like Colman, that, however absurd it may now appear, Colman, on going to the Haymarket theatre one day, accidentally trod on a loose stone on the pavement and splashed himself with muddy water all up his leg. Morris was not to be outdone, and before he entered the theatre, he went and dirtied his silk stocking exactly in the same manner.

Liston undertook, in May 1809, to perform Octavian in the 'Mountaineers,' for his benefit, the Covent Garden company being then at the Haymarket theatre. He acted the part seriously and sensibly; but the audience, from being accustomed to roar with laughter at his comedy, were puzzled what to make of it. Mrs. H. Johnston was the Floranthe, and without any ill compliment to Mr. Liston, her efforts to suppress her feeling of the ludicrous must have been awful. The audience were much more at ease with the remainder of the evening's entertainments, consisting of Dr. Last's Examination, Blue Devils, and Tom Thumb, in which Liston personated Dr. Last, James, and Lord Grizzle admirably. Colman wrote

an address for the occasion, which Liston also delivered.

The annexed invitation was sent by Colman to William Augustus Downs, better known at the period, as "Fat Major Downs," of the St. James's Royal Volunteers, a fellow of infinite humour, though professing the grave trade of an undertaker. It is dated December 3, 1809, "to W. A. Downs, Esq."

"BOISTEROUS SIR!

"(In all whom the fleet was moor'd, as the Poet sings.)

"What effect had the heavy gale of wind upon you, one night, in the course of this last week? I apprehend that it occasioned a tremendous swell in you, and that you must have run very high. It is with painful anxiety that I wait for a detail of the damages done to the shipping, which lay at anchor in you, in such tempestuous weather.

Your name brings to mind, dear funereal Downs,
Both your coffins, and one of our maritime towns.
Renowned Undertaker! all mortals must feel.
That we can't mention Downs, without thinking on DEAL.
Derry Downs, Downs, Downs, derry Downs!

"Will you dine with me to-morrow at five, to meet the great Liston and his little wife; and will you also *undertake* to forward the enclosed to the Cambridge Coffee House, for I know not where it is? I am *obliged* to send an apology to Grubb.

WALTER RALEIGH."

"Send a goose—*i. e. (latinè)* an *Anser*."

Downs was the original "Two Single Gentlemen rolled into One," the actual "Will Waddle" of Colman's capital song.

Whilst narrating the life of George Colman the

younger, we must not omit to speak of the present Mrs. Colman, formerly Mrs. Gibbs, whose gentle manners, and highly informed mind render her conversation both instructive and agreeable. This charming actress made her first appearance on the stage when very young, at the Haymarket Theatre in 1783, as Sally in the elder Colman's farce of 'Man and Wife,' being introduced there by her godfather, Mr. John Palmer. She was very beautiful, and was most favourably received. Her maiden name was Logan. When Palmer opened the Royalty Theatre in 1787, she again appeared before the public in the character of 'Miss in her Teens.' Her interesting figure, her fascinating countenance, and brilliant eyes, made an immediate impression on the audience. The great theatrical powers, however,

> 'The Haymarket, Covent Garden, and Old Drury,
> Issued their edicts full of sound and fury,'

against this eastern edifice; and Palmer was compelled to adopt the entertainments of a minor theatre. Mrs. Gibbs still continued with him, performing in pantomime, and speaking occasional addresses. The first pantomime produced at the Royalty was called 'Hobson's Choice; or, Thespis in Distress,' in which Mrs. Gibbs personated Thalia. On Mr. Palmer's return to Drury Lane, she performed at some of the most respectable provincial theatres.

Soon after the younger Colman undertook the management of the Haymarket Theatre, in consequence of his father's illness, Mrs. Gibbs was engaged

as a substitute for Mrs. Stephen Kemble, who had seceded. Though not possessing the vocal abilities of her predecessor, she excited universal approbation in rustic and simple characters. Having accepted an engagement at Drury Lane Theatre, Mrs. Gibbs acquired further fame during the winter season; but not satisfied, it seems, with this situation, she very soon exchanged it for a better at Covent Garden Theatre, where she remained till the period of her retirement from the stage.

Mrs. Gibbs has had the great advantage of appearing in characters written expressly for her. The artless innocence of Mary, in John Bull, she pourtrayed with great effect. Cicely Homespun, in the Heir at Law, she also performed with deserved approbation. She has been equally successful in the volatile, as in the simple class of character. Her personation of the hoydens in Ways and Means, and the Road to Ruin, was admirable. In serious characters, she moreover appeared with advantage; Yarico, particularly in Marguerite in Travellers Benighted; but she acted Wowski at the Haymarket Theatre, when her beautiful sister, Mrs. Carey (now Mrs. Harris), made her first appearance on the stage as Yarico. Latterly, however, the bustling chambermaids seemed to be her peculiar *forte*. In these parts she proved herself the legitimate successor of Mrs. Mattocks, and never failed to excite universal laughter. Her performance in Mrs. Cowley's Bold Stroke for a Husband, restored to the public a comedy which had long remained on the shelf. No one who had witnessed her deli-

neation of Tilburina in the Critic, would ever forget it. She also shone in some fashionable characters; Lady Contest in the Wedding Day, and Lady Elizabeth Freelove, in the Day after the Wedding. With such an actress in his theatre, and with such an honest, affectionate, and excellent hearted woman at home, George Colman could not be otherwise than happy. Mrs. Gibbs was ever cheerful; and in any kind or charitable actions in the theatre, or elsewhere, she was always liberal and unostentatious.

The summer company of 1809 at the Haymarket, contained among others Young, Mathews, Liston, and Jones. On the 26th June, a farce from the pen of Theodore Hook, entitled 'Killing no Murder,' was refused to be licensed by the Examiner, the cause of which is stated in the preface to the piece as published. It was, however, produced on the 1st July, with alterations, and was so successful that its performances extended to thirty-five nights. On the 10th of July, 'The Foundling of the Forest,' by Mr. Dimond, was represented, and was acted twenty-five nights; and Eyre, the actor, brought out a two-act drama, called 'The Vintagers,' with moderate success. The season, on the whole, was prosperous.

Unfortunately, a disagreement of long standing between the partners of the Haymarket theatre, now rose to a serious height. Winston sided with Mr. Colman; and Mr. Morris fought against both. It ended in awful litigation.

The annexed advertisement appeared in the newspapers of the day.

"THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

"As Joint-Proprietor and Treasurer, Mr. Morris thinks it right to apprise all Persons engaged at this Theatre for the year 1809 (except Mr. and Mrs. Liston), that such engagement terminated on the 15th of September last.

"29th January, 1810."

In 1810, Colman was enabled to avail himself of the services of his old friend Jack Bannister, who played all his favourite parts with unabated vigour; and in addition to Mathews, Liston, and Jones, Charles Kemble made his first appearance at the Haymarket theatre (after eight years absence) as Don Felix in the Wonder.

'The Doubtful Son; or, Secrets of a Palace,' a serious drama, which was produced and performed nineteen nights, introduced Mr. Sowerby (of eccentric notoriety), from the Theatre Royal, Bath. 'Bombastes Furioso,' written by Mr. Rhodes, made full amends for any failure. Liston's General Bombastes, Mathews's Artaxominous, and Taylor's Fusbos, must be imprinted in the recollections of all lovers of broad fun. With this the season wound up merrily.

On May 15th, 1811, the plan of the independent Company was revived. Elliston, who declined acting at the Lyceum, with the Drury Lane Company under Mr. Arnold's management, was engaged for the season. Several new actors were brought to London, the best of whom was Cooper, another Richard Jones came from Edinburgh, Barnes from York, a sterling actor, who did not remain long

enough before the Haymarket audience to be fully appreciated; and Miss Bellchambers, a very handsome *débutante*, were, in addition to others, added to the *corps dramatique*. At the close of the Winter theatres, Liston, Munden, and Jones, rejoined the Haymarket Company.

A new comic piece, called 'Trial by Jury,' was produced May 25, with tolerable success. On June 10th, Mr. Dimond brought out a three-act Play, entitled 'The Royal Oak,' founded on the fortunes of Charles the Second; this was succeeded by a piece called 'The Round Robin,' written and composed by the elder Dibdin, which was speedily condemned. A farce called 'The Outside Passenger,' travelled for a few nights only. This was followed by an extravaganza, entitled 'The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh, or the Rovers of Weimar,' announced in the bills as having been long in preparation, every effort having been strained by the management to *surpass* NATURE. On the evening of July 22, 1811, however, one of the proprietors contrived to frustrate the performances. The heading of the play bill for the above mentioned and several subsequent evenings (a theatrical curiosity) ran as follows:

"THEATRE ROYAL HAYMARKET.

"Messrs. Colman and Winston, from a sense of respect and duty to the public, and in justification of themselves, are under the necessity of giving a short detail of circumstances, which have occasioned the new piece (intended for representation this evening) to be withdrawn, and three of the most principal performers to withhold the further assistance of their talents from the Theatre.

"On a motion brought forward in the High Court of Chancery, on Saturday last, it was deemed proper by the Lord Chancellor to order that Mr. Morris, the Treasurer (who is one of the Proprietors) should be obliged by his partners to pay the salaries of certain performers with whom Messrs. Colman and Winston had entered into engagements. This matter will undergo much future question in a Court of Equity; but in the present stage of the business, Mr. Morris refuses to pay Messrs. Elliston, Jones, and Munden the emolument for which they have agreed to perform; and they have consequently retired from exertion without profit, giving the Managers all the timely notice in their power of their intentions, that their conduct may not be misconstrued into any disrespect to the town: Messrs. Colman and Winston have only to lament that they are (for a time at least) thus restrained from procuring those novelties, and that number of prominent performers, which may merit the patronage of an English metropolis."

The bills on the 25th of July, had the following advertisement:

"RETURN OF MESSRS. ELLISTON, JONES, AND MUNDEN.

"Messrs. Colman and Winston most grateful for past patronage, and solicitous to deserve its continuance by every effort in their power, are happy in announcing to the public, that they have surmounted the great difficulties opposed to them by their partner; and effected the return of the above gentlemen."

On July 26, 'The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh' was produced. It is a satire by Colman on the Managers of Covent Garden Theatre, for having introduced horses and elephants on their stage, that season. A most humorous play-bill, drawn out by Colman, excited the public to expect to see

more than was presented to them, and some disappointment occurred. The Extravaganza was, however, performed thirty-six nights. Liston played Dennis Brulgruddery this season for his benefit; and Colman, having had sufficient interest to get another month tacked to his licence, determined on taking second price, that he might in some measure compete with the Winter houses. The first price to the boxes was now raised from five to six shillings.

In September, Mr. Theodore Hook produced a farce full of fun, entitled 'Darkness Visible,' which was very successful; and on the 30th a piece was brought out under the name of 'Travellers' Benighted; or, the Forest of Rosenwald.' This was a dialogue version of the pantomime of Raymond and Agnes. It was attractive; to Mrs. Gibbs, the author was much indebted for her powerful and natural delineation of Marguerite.

Colman always looked upon Mathews as his trump card, but he had failed in engaging him for the season of 1811. By the following letter, however, it appears that he tried to induce Mathews to play for a part of the season.

"DEAR MATHEWS, August 22, 1811.

"Many thanks for your letter. It appears to me that the chance of your engaging in the Haymarket being so very remote, it would be premature for *me* to mention terms; at all events (and indeed at any time), I think the proposition of remuneration should come from *you*. The owner of marketable goods should first put a price on them.

" My reasons for applying to you were, that I heard you did not mean to perform in the Lyceum at all during the next season,* that you had *rural* views of emolument, and that you speculated upon filling up the greater part of the ensuing twelve months in the country. Supposing such reports might be true, I thought it might be worth your while to come to me on the 15th of September next, and play till the 15th of October (when I close), and also to join me for the whole of *next* season, from the 15th May to the 15th October, 1812, occupying the intermediate months with money-getting out of London.

" But you tell me you will write to me again. After having opened thus much of my plan, you may perhaps look at it in an extended point of view, and give it further consideration. I most heartily rejoice to hear of your success. Believe me to be, my dear Mathews,

Very truly yours,

G. COLMAN."

About this time his Royal Highness the Duke of York obtained leave (from the King's Bench) for Colman to dine at Carlton House. He accompanied the Duke thither. On his walking through the apartments with him, Colman remarked, " What excellent lodgings! I have nothing like them in the King's Bench!" After dinner, he exclaimed,—" Eh! why this *is* wine; pray, do tell me, who that fine looking fellow is at the head of the table?" The good-natured Duke, said, " Hush, George, you'll get into a scrape." " No, no," said Colman, in a

* At this time, the Drury Lane Company were acting at the Old Lyceum Theatre, as they had done during the Winter Seasons, since the destruction of Drury Lane Theatre by fire, in February 1809.

louder voice, "I am come out to enjoy myself; I want to know who that fine, square-shouldered, magnificent-looking, agreeable fellow is, at the head of the table?" "Be quiet, George," interrupted the Duke, "You know it is the Prince." "Why then," continued Colman, still louder, "He is your elder brother. I declare he don't look half your age. Well! I remember the time when he sung a good song! and as I am come out for a lark, for only one day, if he is the same good fellow that he used to be, he would not refuse an old play-fellow." The Prince laughed, and sang. "What a magnificent voice," exclaimed Colman. "I have heard nothing to be compared to it for years. Such expression too! I'll be damned if I don't engage him for my theatre."*

It would appear that this freak gave no offence to the Royal host; for Colman was ever treated with kindness by George the Fourth. The dedication to his Random Records, which is here given, fully corroborates this.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIR,—To your Majesty I have the honour of dedicating, by gracious permission, these desultory Records of my Life; and from your Majesty's long continued patronage and favour I, now, chiefly derive "the means whereby I live." With feelings proud of such exalted protection, and a heart most truly grateful for such constant beneficence, I have the

* The above amusing anecdote, was related to us by an accomplished nobleman, an eye-witness of the scene.

honour to be, Sir, your Majesty's ever dutiful subject, and most devoted servant, George Colman.

Colman addressed the following letter to Mathews in consequence of a report, that he had engaged himself at Covent Garden.

" Melina Place, Westminster Road,

" My Dear Mathews, January 28, 1812.

" Reports are so strong in respect to your being now engaged at Covent Garden, and having no intention of performing with me, that, although I can scarcely conceive such a fact to be possible, I write for your positive contradiction of the above rumours, which have very lately reached me from various quarters. You cannot have forgotten that at our last parting I told you I considered our engagement as *concluded;* and that, although I must, *pro forma* put the proposition to Mr. Morris, yet as I and Mr. Winston had maturely deliberated upon your terms, and had made up our minds upon the expediency of acceding to them, for the good of the Theatre, we should, as the majority of the firm, ratify them, should Mr. Morris's answer turn out contrary to our expectations upon the point. When I talk of this application to Morris, '*pro forma*,' I do not mean to say that it was my intention not to consult him, positively and substantially. I have so consulted him; but yours being a matter which pressed, I had (with Winston) well weighed your proposals, and had decided as to the policy of the engagement, and as to the line to be pursued in case of Morris's objection or negative, and I apprised you of this, that there might be no chance of losing your assistance, through mistake, through indecision, or through any thing which might not appear *virtually*, if not formally, conclusive. I parted with you with the

fullest conviction that our bargain was '*done and done*' on both sides, and with this conviction I thought you to be as fully impressed when you quitted London. But supposing for a moment that you were not so fully impressed, and that you thought some further confirmation, in point of form, still necessary; even under such circumstances, I cannot think that you would treat me with less consideration and delicacy than you showed to Tom Sheridan towards the end of last summer, with whom you had so very far from concluded an engagement, that it has not been settled to this moment, or rather has long been entirely off. Still, having made some advances in such a bargain, you told me you could not think of engaging with me till you had pursued certain measures, so as positively to ascertain whether he left you at liberty. If you felt this as a point of honour incumbent on you towards *him*, the greater length you have gone in your arrangements with *me* (I repeat that I always thought it conclusive), must surely act much more forcibly on your mind. In short, I think it next to impossible that you can have thus flown off from me. But do not leave a shadow of doubt upon me; and let me hear from you instantly.

"It would be a waste of words to point out to you the extreme confusion and disappointment you would create in my theatrical plans. The moment you have refuted (which surely you must) the reports in question, I will transmit to you all the formalities of ratification, which, after all, were to be but a mere memorandum, and might as well have kept cool till our meeting. I sent to Mrs. Mathews some time ago for your direction, but she happened to be out. A few days ago, also, I sent again by letter, and had the favour of a line from her only yesterday, stating that she had been from home.

"You certainly would have heard much sooner, if I had not felt positive on the essential points as to the engage-

ment being decided between us. I rely on your *equity* and *honour*.

Yours, my Dear Mathews, very truly,

To C. Mathews, Esq. G. COLMAN."

The Chancery Suit of the partners of the Haymarket Theatre, still kept all parties at "sixes and sevens," but Colman was extremely anxious to retain Mathews at the Haymarket, as is manifested by the following letter.

"Melina Place, Westminster Road,

"MY DEAR MATHEWS, February 10, 1812.

"I think you owe an apology to yourself, for it is evident you think Charles Mathews is to be suspected, much more than I ever did, or I trust, possibly can doubt him. You have reversed, too, some of your original feelings in respect to my unfortunate italics. The concluding part of my letter (in which poor equity and honour are scored), you first tell me is a sort of salve for bruises, which God knows I had no intention to give; but afterwards you inform me that it is a downright bruise in itself. Why omit all notice of those sundry expressions, which surely may prove in what spirit I made my application for your positive *contradiction* of *rumours?* rumours which I could scarcely think possible. If you take the trouble of recurring to my letter, you will perceive that this sentiment is uppermost throughout; 'and if, after all the multiplied and strong reports which had reached me, some through a man (though not personally and directly communicated to me by him), who had recently left you; if, after this, I indicated any degree of doubt, by naturally going to the fountain head for a refutation, I have only acted towards you as I should towards any other person under the same circumstances.

"My suspicions, therefore, (since you call them so)

were such as I should feel towards all mankind, and were by no means individually levelled. The thought, also, that we might have misunderstood each other as to our engagement, had some operation upon my mind; and in that point of view, let me propose to alter your reading of 'premature castigation,' into 'explanatory statement,' given as fully as I could at a very critical juncture to save time, which the delays of repeated discussions, containing answers and rejoinders by the post might have occasioned. I cannot, in conscience towards myself, satisfy you by saying that I have behaved very ill to you; but from the very bottom of my heart, my dear Mathews, I assure you it was foreign to my intentions to wound your feelings, even in the most remote degree; and I am as much pained in having, even unwittingly, pained you, as you can be.

"As to the proposals from Covent Garden, of that hereafter. I have much to say on that subject when we meet. In the mean time, recollect that I wish you (as I do all others, free at this moment as you are from the great 'Winter Kings'), in any bargain you may make with the superior powers, to stipulate that I may claim your exclusive assistance for *the whole* of my season, in any future engagement which may be formed between us, so that I may be as independent as possible of the courtesies I have hitherto experienced in procuring *leave*, as far as it goes, to engage performers who were originally Haymarketers. This is but equitable. Morris is like Scrub, and will say nothing, 'pro nor con' till there is a peace. In other words, he will neither be an *ass* nor *dissenter* as to any engagement, till the point of management is settled, so, as I am advised 'by my counsel, learned in the laws of the land,' I go on without him; and you are engaged by me and Winston, in behalf of the theatre; by me as the director, and by both of us as the majority of partners.

"The Master's report as to my capability of managing under my present situation is most particularly strong

against Morris. This is the last of his two grand points, and he is licked upon both.

"N.B.—Send me, as soon as possible, any hints, new fancies, &c. which you think would be effective in your own representation, that I may introduce them in a Prelude which I shall write for the opening, and which I purpose to rest chiefly on your shoulders.

"I was out on Friday; did not get your letter till post hours were over. On Saturday, up to my neck in business, and could not write to you. Yesterday was a *dies non* with the London mails. To-day, if length be a dose, I think you have it, and so God bless you. With best wishes and regards to you,

Yours, my Dear Mathews, most truly,

G. COLMAN."

The differences between Colman and Morris frequently placed the performers in very embarrassing positions in regard to the disputants, as appears by the following letter from Colman to Mathews:—

"Melina Place, Westminster Road,

"MY DEAR MATHEWS, 4th April, 1812.

"Many thanks for your communication from Glasgow, which I received yesterday. I have unavoidably lost a day before I could answer it, by waiting for my solicitor's opinion, who advises that you should not answer Morris's notice. And had Morris's notices the effect (which they have not had in any one instance) of inducing performers to throw up their engagements, Mr. Grove, to whom he does not object, would distance *longo intervallo*, as a favourite with the town, all the remaining actors and actresses in the grand Haymarket company. He endeavours to mislead you in respect to Munden, to whose terms he also objected; and he only gives them to you as he (Morris) is willing to have them; and so, probably, he

may misrepresent your terms to others. As to what steps you are to take, he *might* pay you the salary as it has been agreed upon by the majority of his partners. He attempted to play the same silly game last year, and was foiled. He objected to pay Elliston, but was obliged to pay him every shilling.

" Thanks for your hints relative to your proposed personations, much of which I hope to work with good effect into the Prelude, but cannot fix down to them quite so soon as I expected. I shall, however, have finished (the Prelude I mean) by the end of this month, so that there will be a fortnight's interval between its completion and production. Tell me in your next, when you propose being in town. I hope there can be no doubt of your arriving time enough to prepare yourself for the above sketch, with which we ought to open. I wish you were not going to Ireland. Plague on that sea between us. The proverb does not apply to you, but don't take a dip between Holyhead and Dublin. I am glad to hear your opinion of Chippendale, for I have engaged him. He was of the Haymarket hundred in his earliest days. I write in the greatest haste; so, adieu! and continue to prosper. Write soon.

" Ever yours, my Dear Mathews,
G. COLMAN.

" P.S.—Hook certainly goes to the Isle of France, at which I grieve; but with a good appointment, at which I rejoice; but shall lose a most pleasant, clever, and good fellow. He talks of going in three weeks."

The disputes between the proprietors of the Haymarket theatre still continued, and the following advertisement appeared in all the daily papers.

LITTLE THEATRE IN THE HAYMARKET.

" Whereas by the Agreement, dated the 4th day of June, 1805, entered into by the proprietors of the above theatre,

it was agreed that no author, performer, or other persons should be employed, retained, or discharged, in, for, or from the said concern, without the assent of the proprietors; and that no repairs or alterations should be made, nor orders to tradesmen given without the assent of the proprietors.

"Now I, the undersigned David Edward Morris, one of the proprietors of the said theatre, do hereby give notice to all persons whom it may concern, that I am not answerable, nor will be responsible for any engagement whatever, already entered into by my co-proprietors George Colman and James Winston, or either of them, or which they, or either of them may enter into, with any author, performer, or other person, touching the said concern, unless such engagements be in writing, and signed by me; and I am not, and will not be answerable or responsible for any repairs or alterations in or to the said theatre, nor for any orders given to tradesmen, unless such repairs or alterations, and orders to tradesmen respectively, be made or given by directions in writing, signed by them and me.

"Dated the 5th day of May, 1812.

Witness, D. E. MORRIS,
26, Suffolk Street, Charing Cross."

On Mrs. Mountain taking a benefit at the Italian Opera-house, Mathews's name was announced amongst the performers on that evening, which produced the following letter from Colman:

"Melina Place, Westminster Road,

"MY DEAR MATHEWS, 8th May, 1812.

"I find you advertised to appear on the west-side of the Haymarket, the very day previous to your performance on the East! This is very prejudicial to the summer house in which you are to assist us for the season, and will

give a fine opportunity for court and chancery charges to Mr. Morris. Surely, my dear Mathews, if you think for a moment, this ought not to be. I wish success to any individual whom I may know, who takes a benefit at the Opera, but as manager of the summer theatre (whose conduct is so malignantly canvassed by one of his partners), it becomes my duty to prevent your performing on the above occasion, if I have the right to do so.

"Yours very truly,

G. COLMAN."

In 1812, Colman published his 'Poetical Vagaries,' a work full of his usual broad rich humour. This year, Terry made his bow to a London audience, at the summer theatre, and by a happy mixture of industry, good taste, and mature reflection, won his way in the good graces of the frequenters of the Haymarket theatre, and was engaged at Covent-Garden for the following season. He made his first appearance (from Edinburgh), May 20, as Lord Ogleby. Subsequently he acted Shylock, Job Thornberry, Sir Edward Mortimer, and took the routine of principal characters. On the 15th of June, a farce called 'The Sleep-Walker' was produced, from the pen of Mr. Oulton. In this piece Mathews made so great a sensation that it was performed fifty-three nights during the season. On the 8th of July a drama called 'The Child of Chance' appeared, and on the 24th, a comedy in three acts, entitled 'The Fortune Hunters,' but neither of these was very successful. On the 15th of August, another three-act comedy was produced, under the name of 'Look at Home,' which was played fre-

quently, even to the end of the season, during the last month of which second price was again taken.

In 1813, owing to the continued violent disputes between the proprietors, and the embarrassments occasioned by their affairs being brought before the Court of Chancery, no performance whatever took place, although a bill was printed announcing the opening of the theatre, and stating that the celebrated Mrs. Jordan was engaged.

At length the Haymarket theatre opened for the season in 1814, on the 16th of June; but the quarrel, it would appear, still continued, and the management was out of order, for no new piece was produced until July the 18th, when a farce, entitled 'Come and see,' from the pen of Baron Langsdorff, was brought out, and acted thirteen nights. In this year Mathews attempted Falstaff, with great credit to his humour, study, and reading of the part.

The summer season of the Haymarket theatre experienced a severe blow by an accident which happened to Mathews and Terry, who were thrown out of a gig. Terry had two of his ribs broken, and Mathews's hip joint was dislocated, which was the cause of his lameness, and great suffering for the remainder of his life. The subjoined letter was addressed to Mathews on the occasion by Mr. Colman, who was very naturally anxious for the health of his favourite actor, and his return to the theatre.

"Melina Place, Westminster Road,

"My Dear Mathews, 7th August, 1814.

"I know you are as anxious about the forthcoming Harlequinade as I am, and therefore trust you will not

think me unfeelingly pressing upon you by endeavouring to ascertain as soon as possible when it can be produced; or by submitting to your consideration means which may hasten the accomplishment of our wishes. The progress towards a perfect use of your leg is, unfortunately, so uncertain, that there is no calculating upon it: it may be four-and-twenty hours, a week, a month, or longer. Now you say (and I am duly sensible of your friendly zeal), that rather than they should anticipate us at the Lyceum, you would come forward on crutches; but I conceive that a good stout stick, such as serves to prop many a gouty old gentleman, might in two or three days answer your purpose. If they were ready to bring out their pantomime at the other house, directly, you would directly come forward at ours. Why not then (provided it threatens no serious injury to your general health) rescue us from the losses we are nightly experiencing, from our rivals having got the start of us as much as if they were acting "Harlequin, the Black or White," instead of their frequent "Frederick the Great," or anything else? It would be most unnecessarily tedious to point out to you, that we have not even common stock to our backs which is not worn to rags; that your attractions in old matter, as well as all intended novelty, is of infinite consequence; that this cursed accident has lost us time; that this is the 7th of August, and that the winter theatres are to open before the middle of September, &c.

"But this let me tell you in confidence. I was driven to open, *malgré moi*, much sooner than I wished by Mr. Morris. I predicted loss till the giants finished their campaigns, which occurred.

"I then hoped we might pull up our deficiencies, instead of which I have been thrown out of all my projects, and 'loss upon loss' is the consequence. Nothing now remains but the pantomime to get us tolerably even; which time will render impossible, unless it be produced almost in-

stantly. I can expect no gain this season. I hoped for recovery; but unless you can give your aid, I shall 'on horror's head horrors accumulate.'

"After this preamble, it only remains to say, can you, my dear Mathews, enable me to advertise that the pantomime will be produced on any day (which you will name) between this and next Sunday?

"Yours ever, most truly,
G. COLMAN."

This pantomime was entitled 'Hocus Pocus, or Harlequin washed white.' Mathews appeared in it on the 12th of August, as a speaking Harlequin, with the following apology, delivered by Terry, then stage manager.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"Before the curtain rises, I am requested to say a few words to you in behalf of an invalid.

"Mr. Mathews still continues to suffer much, very much from his late severe accident; but he trusts that his anxiety in coming forward thus early to perform his duty to you, and to fulfil his engagements here, will atone for his deficiencies in bodily activity, requisite to the character he is about to sustain. A former very celebrated proprietor of this theatre once enjoyed the fullest favour as 'a devil upon two sticks,' and it is hoped, nay, it cannot be doubted, that you will now extend your utmost indulgence to a harlequin upon *one!*"

On the 23rd of August a new comedy from the rapid pen of Mr. Jameson was produced, under the title of 'Love and Gout.' We are inclined to think that some alteration was made in this piece to

accommodate it to the lameness of Mathews. The comedy was successful.

In 1815, Colman, it would appear by the following letter, renewed Mathews's engagement for the season at the Haymarket theatre.

" Melina Place, Westminster Road,

" My Dear Mathews, 7th April, 1815.

" I lament to find that you meditate a jolting journey, which will consign you to the mail, when you dread the motion of a hackney-coach to convey you half-a-mile beyond Westminster-bridge. I have communicated your return from Brighton to my partners, and, as in duty bound, now convey their sentiments to you; but as they agree, I shall embody them with my own, and write as from myself. The Haymarket theatre cannot afford you more money, but it first started you in London, has been an old customer to you, and dealt for your talents in the gross; and much might be argued against its suffering through country purchases of your present popularity by retail, a retail scooped out of our wholesale engagement. You were unable to fulfil one of these rural spirting bargains last year of course; the Provincial Manager did not give you a shilling, but the Haymarket did, and with a shrunk treasury, through the unfortunate accident which rendered you incapable of performing a part of your compact. You know me, I think, too well to attribute my mentioning this circumstance in any spirit of illiberal recurrence.

" I had much rather recur to your great bodily exertions which your zeal induced you to suffer under great bodily pain; but it falls in my way, as general pleading of wholesale trading, *versus* chandlery.

" 'Tis true, as you observe, that this is your day; but the individual attraction of an individual actor generally

declines faster than his talents. Novelty ceases to be novel upon repetition, and days have their end. Now, when your day in the country may be over, and you may be every whit as good an actor as you are at this instant, you would think it hard if the Haymarket theatre said, "Your salary must be lowered, because you can get nothing worth going out of town for in the summer." Yet this language would have the same basis of argument as your own; would be precisely your own principle in an inverse ratio. Consider this, and much more, which the above sketch of my motives may suggest to you, and then act according to your own feelings. Should they decide you to be a week from the Haymarket during its season (which may probably consist of no more than seven weeks altogether), I do beg and entreat you that this said week may be our commencing, *our very first* week; for, when you once begin with me, your going would be destruction. Surely you can arrange to get away a week before Covent Garden closes, whether the Haymarket should open before that time or not. This would much assist my little scheme. Think for me, and do your best; or shall I call on you on Wednesday next? I cannot sooner. Remember, I consider you as engaged to me.

Yours most truly,

G. COLMAN."

To Charles Mathews, Esq.

In this year Jones took his benefit at Covent Garden theatre, and amongst other attractions, introduced a masquerade on the stage. Colman, who had always admired the domestic worth, gentlemanly manners, and histrionic talents of Richard Jones, wrote at the performer's request the following lines, as an introduction to the Masquerade:

PROLOGUE FOR MR. JONES'S MASQUERADE,

Given on the 3rd of June, 1815, *at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.*

When Wine and Masquerades were hither sent,
Neatly imported from the Continent,
Then Johnny Bull each continental freight
Incontinently did adulterate;
And Masquerades, announced in town, forebode
As downright trash as Port upon the road.

Take, in a careless hasty sketch display'd,
The joys of London's public masquerade;—
A midnight squeeze, which ends in morning riot,
All roaring!—no,—the *Dominoes* are quiet;
In lutestring state *they* stalk, and seem to say,
We are, by night, just what we are by day,
Mere Bond-street Loungers, come to see the fun,
And as for character,—we keep up none.

Then pouring in, come Punches, Turks, and Tailors,
Heavy-heel'd Harlequins, and inland Sailors;
Jews without Hebrew, brogueless Pats from Cork,
And Clodpoles without dialect from York;
Sportsmen, who scarce have seen one furrow's ridge,
And ne'er shot anything but London Bridge;
Attorneys' Clerks as Shepherds,—doom'd to know
No fields but those which Lincoln's Inn can show;
But who, if not by sheep, by parchment thrive,
And scrawl upon the skins they never drive.
These Corydons address, in cockney tone,
The high-rouged Phyllises from Marybone;
The high-rouged Phyllises, more kind than fair,
Bid not the Shepherds, blest with cash, despair;
Preferring far the *notes* of modern swains
To those which old Arcadians piped on plains.

Thickening the throng, see staggering upright Quakers,
Butchers, Haymakers, Bakers, Kennel-rakers,
Nun, Gipsey, Jockey, Friar, Cobbler, King;
All, all, that Chaos can together bring,
Sans wit, sans humour, and "sans every thing."

Here Songsters squall,—fat waltzers there advance,
To crush our toes with what they call a dance;
A dance at which a well-taught bear would blush;
Till supper is announced,—and, then, a rush!
The Masks get neither seats nor meats enough—
Rolls stale, ham rank, pies mouldy, chickens tough;
Cold punch grown warm, dead porter, wine that 's rum,
And Waiters "coming" who will never come.
This scramble o'er, the revel rises high,
With Debauchees and Dollies in full cry;
Till all in blazing sunshine reel away,
With fever'd head-aches to doze out the day.

To-night, we try from foreign schools to glean,
And, if we can, to *regulate* the scene;
To cleanse the home-bred specimens before us,
And be, if not less dull, much more decorous.

CHAPTER XII.

1816—1822.

The Haymarket Theatre in 1816—Exit by Mistake—Tokely—The Actor of all Work—Teasing made Easy—The Green Man—Lord Erskine and Colman—Armata—Increased size of Theatres—Education of Actors—Royal Academy of Music at Paris—Miss O'Neil—Colman's Jokes—Pigeons and Crows—Colman re-visits Mulgrave Castle—Address to the Year 1819—X. Y. Z.—Colman appointed Lieutenant to the Yeomen of the Guard—John Taylor—Rev. Robert Lowth—Early acquaintance renewed—Correspondence with Lowth—His rapid Illness and Death.

THE Haymarket Theatre again opened for the season on the 1st of July, 1816. The company included Fawcett, Jones, Terry, Tokely, Russell, Duruset, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Gibbs, Miss Carew, &c. Miss Copeland (since the clever Mrs. Fitzwilliam) also made her first appearance in London this season. She was a little, pretty, fair girl, and acted with remarkable spirit and ability. On the 22nd July, Mr. Jameson brought out a comedy entitled 'Exit by Mistake,' in which the character of Crockery, enacted by Tokely, convulsed his audience with laughter. Jones, Terry, and Mrs. Gibbs, contributed materially to the complete success of that drama.

After the usual success of a short wet summer, the Haymarket Theatre closed with A Chip of the Old

Block, Exit by Mistake, and The Dead Alive, for the benefit of Russell. Mr. Mathews made his first appearance this season in the characters of Chip and Motley. After the comedy, the following Address, from the pen of Colman, was delivered by Terry.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

"I am deputed by the proprietors of this Theatre, to offer you their most cordial thanks, for the patronage with which you have honoured them during their very short season. They lament that the increased speculations of higher theatrical powers, whose influence at present must regulate their motions, so very much curtail the period of exertion on this spot, to merit your favour. But one material ingredient in theatres should be wit, and brevity, we are told, is the soul of it; if so, the proprietors here should feel particularly obliged to their neighbours for rendering their seat of dramatic exhibition, wittier and wittier every year."

In 1817, we find, by the following letter, Colman again in treaty with Mathews for his summer campaign.

"Melina Place, Westminster Road,

"DEAR MATHEWS, 24th Jan. 1817.

"The time has arrived (perhaps a little gone by), for closing engagements of the most consequence to the Haymarket theatre. But I have waited thus long since our last interview, when I broached my present business to you, in the hope that you 'would come, at last, to comfort me.'

"Have the goodness, now, to decide whether you will or will not belong to the chosen few. It is unnecessary to tell you that I shall be gratified in the renewal of a professional

commerce with one in whom talent and zealous integrity are combined. I should have spoken in the plural throughout, for I give you the sentiments of myself and Co.

Very truly yours,

G. COLMAN."

The Haymarket season of 1817 was rendered remarkable by the production of a one-act piece, called 'The Actor of All Work.' It was from the pen of Colman, and afforded the inimitable Mathews an opportunity of exhibiting his varied and wonderful powers. This piece was produced on the 13th of July, and ran all the remainder of the season, the benefits excepted. Mathews, Terry, Tokely, Jones, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Gibbs, Miss Carew, Mrs. Davenport, &c., aided the summer campaign greatly by their efforts; and a three-act comedy by Mr. Jameson, called 'Teasing made Easy,' raised Tokely to increased eminence, in the character of Peter Pastoral.

The season of 1818 included the names of Liston, Russell, Tokely, Terry, Jones, Warde, Connor, Mrs. Gibbs, Mrs. Liston, Miss E. Blanchard, &c. Mr. Jameson produced this year a comedy entitled 'Nine Points of the Law,' which had not the merit or success of its predecessors by the same pen; and on the 15th of August, the comedy of 'The Green Man,' (a free translation from the French,) by Jones the comedian, was represented for the first time with considerable success. The comedy contained much genuine wit. From the dedication of the author to Colman, prefixed to the printed copy

of the play, it would appear that it had undergone his revision and able additions.

" My Dear Sir,

" My apology for dedicating this humble attempt to the most eminent dramatic writer of the age, is, that it enables me publicly to acknowledge the many acts of private friendship you have from time to time conferred on me; and the assistance which, in the course of my profession, I have so frequently derived from your masterly pen.

" To your improving hand, which has the magic power of producing verdure from an unfertile soil, I attribute, in a great degree, the very flattering reception with which 'The Green Man' has been honoured by the public; accept, my dear Sir, my warmest thanks, and believe me,

Your sincere admirer,
Grateful friend, and humble servant,
Richard Jones."

After a short but most productive season, the Haymarket theatre closed on Saturday, 12th September, with the customary address, delivered by Mr. Terry.

In 1818, Colman and Lord Erskine entered into a correspondence on a theatrical subject, occasioned by his Lordship having printed a book entitled 'Armata,' in one volume, to which, after some little interval, he added a second. The work is partly of a political and partly of a satirical description. By Armata is meant England; and Swallowal represents London.

Colman's valued and noble friend kindly made him a present of these volumes, accompanied by the following letter:

"Upper Berkeley Street,

"DEAR SIR, March 10, 1818.

"As men of real genius are always the most indulgent critics, I send you my little Romance without fear. The two parts are very different. The first was intended to be a kind of bolus to swallow my old politics in, which were too long passed to be a political pamphlet; and, having got out of this our world, without going to that from whose bourn no traveller returns, I was obliged to come back again to town, describing it, however, as if in the world I had just left. I should like to know whether you think my remarks upon the stage are correct.

Believe me to be always,
Yours most faithfully,
ERSKINE."

"I ought to apologize," says Colman "perhaps, for printing a panegyric upon my humble abilities, but I consider the commencement of Lord Erskine's letter as the mere expression of courtesy. Whether he mean't it so or not, I supposed him in earnest when he desired to hear what I thought of his Remarks on the Stage. Those remarks were comprised under three heads; namely, 'Occasional tumults in the London Theatres; the dimensions of the Two principal Theatres; and the Education of Actors.'

"I sent him my thoughts he requested, crudely, though somewhat copiously written; wherein I took the liberty to differ entirely from the noble Lord on the first and last topics; on the second, we for the most part agreed. The first more immediately appertains to those half-repentant reflections, on turning dramatist, which I have stated myself to

have made, after having divided the house, though with a large majority in my favour, upon the question of my Ways and Means: so on this first topic I now give an extract from a copy of the manuscript which I forwarded to Lord Erskine.

"'There was no tumult or disorder (in the theatre) which I was told almost never took place but when something was radically wrong.' *

"It is taken for granted that the expression of 'radically wrong' refers to the London Stage and the conduct of its concerns, and not to the audience: but although, almost never, is a qualifying expression, it seems to give more credit to that mass of people which fills a playhouse, than perhaps it deserves. The dramatic, like the political stage, if it may be compared with that much more important scene of action, may be pestered and galled with incendiaries and malignants; with Radicals who should be uprooted, and Reformers who should reform themselves.

"A theatrical audience being a multitude, it is to be recollected that a small part of a multitude can foment 'tumult and disorder;' and in all multitudes there are many to be found who are illiberal, capricious, and ill-judging enough to be frequently clamorous about many matters which are not 'radically wrong.' A play-going multitude is, moreover, less apprehensive than another mob of consequences arising from its distemperature; for all its component parts, from the nobleman to the cobbler, are the 'Drama's Patrons;' and the pro-

* 'Armata,' Vol. II., p. 108.

tégés who depend upon their favour seldom can, and seldom dare appeal from the laws of their patrons to the laws of their country. Is it to be conceived that such a heterogeneous body, invested with such powers of being turbulent, will not often be so without just cause?

"Few men glide through even the most private life without encountering an enemy; but a dramatist, however personally retired, is virtually, and in a peculiar point of view before the public, and accumulates fresh opponents as often as he courts fresh notice. His mere act of coming forward to establish a name is a sort of assumption; a writer who professes to amuse and at the same time admonish mankind, to sway their passions and to improve their morals, implies that he thinks himself somewhat more intellectually gifted than his neighbours. Now, whether his work be radically right or wrong, men are prepared to cavil at the lessons of such a preceptor; and will not this propensity in an audience so far at least augment the rigour of fastidious criticism, that stern justice may, in some cases, forget to temper herself with mercy?

"But, besides this probable feeling in an audience, for it is only mentioned conjecturally, there have been, doubtless, various persons who, on the first night of a new play, have aimed at the author's miscarriage from private pique or some uncharitable or wanton motive; and who have been upon the alert to effect it by 'tumult and disorder.'

"Envy alone is the parent of mischief; and, should the playwright have already attained pre-

eminence, the very flood of his popularity pours upon him a number of invidious foes, as the clearest torrent brings a certain portion of rubbish.

" If a manager ' writes himself,' as it is expressed in The Critic, he is more obnoxious to enmity than other dramatists; because, in addition to the adversaries which all dramatists have to encounter in common, various would-be authors and actors, whose offers he has rejected, or which he has accepted to their own public exposure, are outrageous against him, and come themselves, and form a party when they can, to explode his play, on its first representation. Is it not to be said, on these occasions, when to wound the man through his Muse is the latent object, that ' tumult and disorder' arise from something which is not ' radically wrong' on the part of the author and manager?

" Any dramatist (be he manager or not), when he first brings his plays into action, exposes himself more to the attacks of malice and wanton hostility than any other description of writer. Authors for the closet can never be absolutely discredited through such a condemnation as causes immediate and decisive failure; but the dramatist draws a bill upon Fame, at sight; it is acknowledged or protested at the moment it is presented; those who would rejoice at seeing him a bankrupt, are not likely to neglect the opportunity of dishonouring his draught; and this is to be effected by ' tumult and disorder,' when the million has nothing ' radically wrong' to reprobate.

" There are not only enemies, as above mentioned, of the several dramatists, but enemies also, of the

particular houses in which their dramas are produced; there are Drury Lane and Covent Garden party-men; who, accordingly as they are attached to the interests of one house, are hostile to the prosperity of the other. During the first night of a representation at Covent Garden, I have heard the call of 'turn out those noisy fellows from Drury Lane,' and *vice versâ*; but it would be very unjust to infer that such low zealots are set on, or at all encouraged in their malevolent endeavours, by the rival proprietors.

"Not very long ago, it was the fashion, a fashion not yet, perhaps, entirely worn out, for the bucks and blades, and bloods of the town, to go to a new play on purpose to condemn it; this tumultuous attempt to annihilate anything, and everything, before it could be ascertained to be right or wrong, being denominated good sport, and high fun.

"During the greater portion of time consumed in the disgraceful O. P. Riots, surely the rioters were 'radically wrong,' (indeed rioters can never be right,) after the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre had ceased to be wrong at all. The Proprietors were clumsy politicians in attempting to force Catalani, a foreigner from the Italian Opera, upon the English stage, at the moment they were raising their prices upon the public; the public seized this circumstance to resist an increased demand upon them for entrance; blending the abstract question of Catalani, and of certain additional Private Boxes, with the question of an advanced price upon admission; an advance fairly justified by the enormous, though

certainly absurd expense incurred in building a new theatre on so spacious and magnificent a plan. The proprietors, in submission, relinquished Catalani, and rescinded the additional private boxes; notwithstanding which, 'tumults and disorders,' of a very ruffian-like description, were systematically continued, when nothing remained 'radically wrong' to protract them.

"Lately,* no *débutant* could appear in King Richard the Third without an evident party to explode him, as soon as he entered upon the stage, because Mr. Kean was their idol. There is not the most distant intention to insinuate here that Mr. Kean would not spurn at this outrage in his admirers, on the contrary, it is trusted he would be one of the first to declare that they were 'disorderly and tumultuous,' before anything 'wrong' could be discovered, except in themselves.

"Whence arise the deafening vociferations, when there is a full house, of 'turn him out!' and 'throw him over?' Why is a vocal performer so often kept on a see-saw, called back, sent off, called back again, about the *encore* of a song, and at last, after ten minutes, perhaps, of confusion, obliged to sing it in the midst of the 'tumult and disorder' of a divided audience?

"Again, why is a play, on the first exhibition of a Christmas Pantomime, acted almost in dumb-show, like the mummery that is to follow it, in consequence of the 'tumult and disorder' of the spec-

* It should be remembered that this was written in the year 1818.

tators? Why is the same uproar kept up on an Easter Monday? Why, during the intervals, however short, between the acts, is the stage strewed with apples, and orange-peels, accompanied in their descent thither, by the shouts, groans, whistles, catcalls, yells, and screeches of the turbulent assemblage which has so elegantly impelled its vegetable projectiles from the upper regions? Why was poor Nosey, of the Orchestra, not yet quite forgotten by veteran play-goers, tormented nightly by hearing the *soubriquet* he had acquired from his proboscis, bellowed at him from the galleries? Why are disturbances in the upper boxes, and lobbies, among blackguards and women of the town, by no means rare? Certainly from nothing 'radically wrong' in the conductors of a theatre.

"In pursuing this side of the question, it is freely admitted, on the other hand, that very much theatrical trash may be swallowed peaceably and orderly, through favour and cabal; but this admission no more relinquishes what has been advanced, than allowing one eye to be in a head is an acknowledgment that there is not another: and, putting both prejudices and predilections, to be found in many parts of an audience, out of the question, how far there may be want of judgment in that public whom managers and actors are obliged to call *the discerning*, how far such a bulk of discerners may *not* discern, how far its rude breath may blow down merits it might uphold, while it supports the bubbles it should break, is left to future consideration.

"Much might be superadded, to fortify an opinion that 'almost never,' in the preceding quotation, is too lenient an expression towards that many-headed monster, by which a London Theatre exists; it is, however, the lenity of a British mind, putting the best gloss upon national character; a lenity fraught with the *amor patriæ*.

"The above animadversions, which were transmitted to the noble author of Armata, at his own desire, contain all that has any bearing upon my reasons for an incipient, but now confirmed, dislike to those turbulent and often humiliating ordeals which the professed dramatist must repeatedly undergo.

"Upon his Lordship's second question, which relates to the enormous dimensions of our two principal theatres, he says, 'let no apology be made for the magnitude of their playhouses;' deeming such magnitude 'a very great defect.'

"On his third and last point, the 'Education of Theatrical performers,' I give my sentiments.

"Another cause has long obstructed a more continued succession of superior actors, but which, for the improved manners and genius of many of them, both dead and living, has been for some time insensibly wearing away; I mean the estimation in which the stage has been regarded.*

"This is delicately worded, 'estimation,' according to the sense in which the author has employed

* 'Armata,' Vol. II., p. 110.

it, being a tender term for downright disrepute. In reference to the stage, he proceeds by saying: 'To secure for it a perpetual and still increasing lustre, the road should be open, as in other professions, to the most liberal considerations, nothing else can invite its professors to learned and polished educations; without which, in the superior branches of acting, there can be no brilliant succession.'* And, further on, 'to bring the stage, therefore, in England, and indeed every where else, to its proper bearings, its professors must be cherished and respected.†

"But should it not be asserted, that the obstructive cause, namely, 'the estimation (meaning disrepute) in which the stage has been regarded,' has long actually worn out, rather than that it 'has been for some time insensibly wearing away? and is it fair to complain that there has not been a long-'continued succession of superior actors' in our metropolis? all such succession, at least, as the most favourable estimation of the stage can produce; for though such estimation may 'invite its professors' to polish themselves, it cannot give them absolute genius; a succession of which must always be a matter of chance.

"Actors are, and have been for a length of time, in this country, frequently seen at tables with the nobility; when those among them who have the manners of gentlemen are 'respected' accordingly; and they all meet respect as far as their talents, which procure them invitations to such tables, have a claim to it.

* 'Armata,' pp. 110, 111. † *ib.* p. 112.

" Without going further back, does not Pope say, speaking of Cibber,

' Has not Colley, too, his Lord, &c. ?'

and surely, in the present day, no body of men enjoy more opportunities of mingling in the society of their superiors in rank than actors. With these facilities, even courted as they are by persons of high birth, the rest must depend upon themselves; but it does not appear that good dinners, in good company, lead the generality of them to the pursuits of literature.

" Without which learned and polished education, in the superior branches of acting there can be no brilliant succession. We might have self-taught genius even from the desert, but the ordinary soil of nature must be highly dressed. Does the learned and ingenious traveller to Armata mean to say that we should have a school for actors? a school to teach them all the dead and living languages; a college to lecture them on the old classics; to instruct them in ancient and modern history, in logic, ethics, mathematics, in the Belles Lettres, and in fashions? Does he opine that such a school is indispensable to drill performers, in order to prepare them for the representation of the heroes of Greece, the emperors of Rome, the old kings and barons of England, the gentlemen in the days of Henry the Eighth, Queen Anne, his late Majesty George the Second, and his present Majesty George the Third? If so, this seems to be much more than is necessary.

"That the soil of nature is better for being 'highly dressed,' is, in a general point of view, indisputable; but what high dressing will most enrich the soil of an actor's genius is another consideration. And may not deep learning sometimes stiffen genius (particularly the genius of an actor) into pedantry? as the stays and backboards of pretty misses mend their shapes by destroying their ease.

"Is it not rather an easier task for actors of any genius to perform kings, heroes, and gentlemen, than to write them; as Shakspeare did, with little or no pretensions to learning? and did not Shakspeare, as a dramatist, with his 'small Latin and less Greek*,' some read it 'no Greek,' surpass Ben Jonson with all his erudition?

"And then, what is to be done with the females of a theatre? must they be learned, too? Can they not represent queens, and heroines, and gentlewomen, without going to school, or to college, or to routs, or to court? Queen Elizabeth talked and wrote Latin; but can no woman act Queen Elizabeth, unless she is a scholar? or a Roman matron, unless she has been grounded in the Roman language, or the Roman history? or may not Mrs. Siddons have reached the height of her great theatrical celebrity without being a blue-stocking?

"There is at Paris an 'Ecole Royale de Musique,' an establishment upon which the King of France

* Ben Jonson's celebrated charge against Shakspeare; see Colman the Elder's Prose Works, 1787, Vol. II., p. 178.

expends 168,000 francs, or 7000*l.* per year*; the object of which is to instruct, under the ablest masters, four hundred young persons of both sexes, in all the branches of vocal and instrumental music and acting: there is, moreover, a course of French grammar, versification, and as much history as is necessary; also, a course called *Tenue de Corps*, which is the art of disposing the body and limbs to the greatest possible advantage, and a course of dancing.

"Frenchmen, it is well known, profess to carry their ideas of the stage, like many other of their ideas, to the extreme point of refinement. Their Tragedy, in particular, is so refined, that it is much too sublime for the taste of John Bull, or for nature; but it is to be observed, in the above-mentioned Ecole, how very small a proportion of its studies are allotted to learning, or to classical education. Music, no doubt, must be taught, in all countries, to those who would attain eminence as public singers; to this the Ecole attends, and adds fencing and dancing to give the graces. Declamation, too, they teach, and French tragedians do declaim with a vengeance! But, after all this, the pupils are no further instructed than in the grammar of their native tongue, in versification, for the improvement of the ear, and as much history as is necessary.

"Now, no performer of good common sense

* Again the reader is requested to remember that this was written in 1818.

and understanding can read one of Shakspeare's historical plays, in which he is to act, without deriving from it as much instruction, as to character, manners, and customs, as may enable him to enter into the spirit of his part. It would be going too far to say that more historical knowledge would not be beneficial to him, but the play itself might furnish him with as much history as is necessary for the occasion.

" It is presumed that a genius for ' genteel comedy,' as it is called, is quick in catching the manners of a gentleman; a few lessons among the upper ranks, may, therefore, be sufficient for him: but it is curious to observe in private theatricals, that the amateurs, from whom the professed actor is to learn deportment and manners, are a thousand times more awkward upon a stage than a regular performer of very moderate ability.

" The expression of the passions is one great and primary part of a superior actor's skill; and, as to tragedy, the art of exhibiting the sudden and violent commotions of mind, in King Lear, Othello, Macbeth, and various other characters, is not to be brought to perfection by the study of books, nor by an intercourse with the most highly polished society. An actor of the passions obtains inconsiderable aid from the library, and much less from the drawing-room: he must closely watch the effects of impulsive nature in universal man.

" Many instances might be brought of actors who have been superior, without the advantage of the *literæ humaniores*, or of familiar habits with

the great; nay, of superior actors seemingly rather below par in intellect, except in their profession. Powell, the tragedian, who died young, was highly successful; he came upon the stage, uncultivated, from his desk in an attorney's office, and was considered in private life to be a person of rather inferior understanding. Where did the young tragic actress*, lately retired from Covent Garden Theatre, procure the graces and energies for which she has been so justly admired? where did she learn to personate, not only the Juliets, and Belvideras, and Isabellas, but the Lady Townleys, Mrs. Oakleys, &c.? in minor theatrical companies, travelling about the obscurer districts of Ireland.

" 'The most uneducated,' says the Traveller to Armata, 'may excel in clowns, and buffoons, and lower characters;' but, since some actors may perform a clown without associating with country bumpkins, why may not others play a gentleman, or a hero, without owing much to scholastic education, or to an intimacy with people of fashion, or to an old acquaintance with Mark Antony or Julius Cæsar? A London performer, living with his equals only, may be supposed, although excellent on the stage as a peasant, to have as few ploughmen as peers for his companions.

" The character of Lovel, in the farce of 'High Life below Stairs,' demands the manners both of a gentleman and a rustic; yet this has been well represented by many who have neither moved in

* Miss O'Neill, now Mrs. Becher.

very high, nor very low circles. Feignwell, in Centlivre's 'Bold Stroke for a Wife,' is a field-officer, assuming the various disguises of a beau, a conjuring virtuoso, a Dutch merchant, a superannuated country steward, and a quaker. Woodward, John Palmer, John Bannister, Elliston, and Mathews were all excellent in this part; but they were no more indebted for their celebrity in it, to the schools or to the precepts of the late Lord Chesterfield, than to coxcombs, conjurors, Dutch traders, stewards, or quakers.

"Give a candidate for the stage, who has talent, that sort of schooling which almost all decent parents, even below the rank of gentlemen, afford their children, put Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary into his hands, give him a smattering of French, with a few lessons of fencing and of graceful attitudes and motions from the best masters, and he will have acquired more than several who have been eminent upon the stage, and be nearly as learned and elegant as five out of ten perhaps of the dandies who are to teach him the bon ton of clubs and of fashionable assemblies.

"Whether my readers may coincide with me in these loose thoughts which I have ventured to throw upon paper, time, and perhaps the sages in criticism may show; they are submitted as points to be mooted, and not as opinions in which I presume to pass a definitive judgment:

"How far my departed noble friend, to whom they were addressed, appeared to approve them, may be gathered from the letter here subjoined:

"Upper Berkeley Street,

"My Dear Sir, April 12, 1818.

"I would sooner have told you how much I was pleased and obliged by your observations, but I was in the country, and only received them on my return to town.

"Nothing can be more just, as well as interesting, than the whole of them, which I shall carefully preserve.

Yours most faithfully,

Erskine."

While speaking of Lord Erskine and George Colman, we are reminded of the following jokes. Colman and Bannister were dining one day with Lord Erskine, the ex-Chancellor, who, in the course of conversation on rural affairs, boasted that he kept on his pasture land nearly a thousand sheep. 'I perceive, then,' said Colman, 'your Lordship has still an eye to the Wool-sack.'

An old lady named Wall had been an actress in a subordinate situation many seasons in the Haymarket theatre, for whom Colman from early associations appears to have had a kind consideration. We must all pay the debt of nature, and in due time the old lady died. Somebody from the theatre went to break the intelligence to Colman; who on hearing it, inquired "whether there had been any bills stuck up?" The messenger replied in the negative, and ventured to ask Mr. Colman, why he had put that question? Colman answered, "They generally paste bills on a *Dead Wall*: don't they?"

Colman, himself no giant, was singularly fond of quipping persons of short stature. Liston, and pretty *little* Mrs. Liston, were dining with him, and

towards evening, when preparing to leave their host, Liston said, "Come Mrs. L. let us be going." "Mrs. L ('*ELL*,') indeed," exclaimed Colman, "Mrs. *Inch*, you mean."

One day, speaking of authorship as a profession, Colman said, "It is a very good walking stick, but very bad crutches."

A Mr. Faulkener had been engaged at the Haymarket from a provincial theatre, and appeared in a comedy without producing any great sensation: in fact, Colman was disappointed with his new actor, who had to deliver the following line, which he spoke in a nasal tone,

"Ah! where is my honour, now?"

Colman, who was behind the scenes, took a hasty pinch of snuff, and muttered "I wish *your honour* was back at Newcastle again with all my heart."

Another aspirant for Thespian honours made his debût at the Haymarket theatre, in the character of Octavian, in the Mountaineers. It was discovered very early in the performance that he had undertaken a task for which he was unqualified. Colman was in the green-room, and growing fidgetty, when the new performer came to the line,

"I shall weep soon, and then I shall be better."

"I'll be d——d if you will," said Colman, "if you cry your eyes out!"

Colman published in 1819, another edition of a little volume under the title of 'Broad Grins,' consisting of 'My Night Gown and Slippers,' with additional tales.

The season at the Haymarket did not open until

July 20, 1819, later than usual. This was owing to the Drury Lane company taking refuge there, on the Sub-Committee closing that theatre prematurely. Jones, Liston, Terry, Mrs. Edwin, Mrs. Gibbs, and Mrs. Davenport, were in the company: and a new comedy from the pen of Theodore Hook, under the title of 'Pigeons and Crows,' was received with acclamation.

Colman, we have been told, had got into a habit of sitting up late at night; and was consequently very late in bed in the day-time. On Mr. Theodore Hook calling one afternoon at his house, his name was immediately carried up to Colman, "What's the hour?" "Past three, Sir." "What, does Mr. Hook suppose I rise with the lark? ask him to return at any reasonable hour, and I shall be glad to see him."

In the autumn of 1819, and after the lapse of about *forty-five years*, Mr. Colman made another excursion to Mulgrave, at the invitation of its then possessor. We subjoin his own account of this visit.

"In the first visit, I went thither as a boy with my father; I was in my thirteenth year; my son, Edmund Craven Colman, who accompanied me on my second visit, was in his seventeeth." After a jolting journey, they arrived at their destination; we quote his own words in description.

"Four miles short of the coast in the village of Sleights, we quitted the main road from London, and turned into an improved way to the place of our destination, thus avoiding Whitby, the break-neck *Upgang*, and the subsequent *Syrtis*, flanked by the Ocean and cliffs. This struck me as excellent; for it is according to my poor way of thinking, no

inconsiderable advantage in the bearings upon a country seat, that you may approach it without the risk of being hurled down a precipice, overtaken by the sea, or smothered in a quicksand; but, for the accommodation of all tastes, the ancient route is generously left open to those who may prefer it.

"From Sleights, we had about six miles farther to go, and having accomplished half way, we arrived at one of the Mulgrave Lodges; hence we had a delicious drive by moonlight through those fine woods already mentioned, as having been excluded till we reached the site of the old house; but the house itself had flourished prodigiously during my absence of five-and-forty years, and had absolutely grown into a castle. It had been, in fact, almost completely gutted, heightened, increased with wings, each larger than the primary dwelling: the front reversed and looking towards the sea, the bowling-green bowled off, the old staring stables moved, and the new castellated edifice and woods connected and gracing each other. The late Constantine Lord Mulgrave completed, I believe, this metamorphosis of the mansion, and cut some walks and drives through the woodland scenery, where much has since been effected.

"My stay here at this time was a little more than a fortnight. We had occasional visitors, and the inmates then at the castle were not a small family party; a party which as the reader must have already seen, was very interesting to me. My time passed delightfully, excepting two days, during which I was laid up by Friar Bacon, on whom I had taken a ride

to Whitby. The fat of this handsome pampered animal proclaimed him an old favourite, and the width of his back distended my femoral sinews as if I had been put to the question by the Spanish Inquisition. My kind and noble friend had, I know, been studying my comfort before he mounted me upon this corpulent quadruped, whose ambling pace was smoother than the swing of a cradle, but oh! his rotundity! take him altogether he was one of the mildest tortures that ever stretched the limbs of an elderly gentleman.

"On taking my leave, I scrawled the following doggerel in an Album which is on the table of the library. However worthless the poetry, it contains a 'brief epitome' of the altered state of the place, and of my unalterable feelings.

AN ADDRESS TO THE PRESENT YEAR, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND NINETEEN.

Written on the 10th of November, on the eve of departure from Mulgrave Castle.

SWEET Eighteen Hundred Ten and Nine,
Who art, like me, on the decline,
I prize thee beyond measure!—
Whate'er my days when thine are past,
I shall remember, to my last,
What store thou brought'st of pleasure.

But listen to the reason why
I hail thee, Annus Domini,
In language so endearing:
Nay, patience!—'tis not much to give,
From full seven weeks Thou hast to live,
A bare five minutes' hearing.

Thy tour above two-thirds was run,
Ere my excursion I begun,
  Due north in its direction,
To view, once more, now I am grey,
Scenes where my boyhood loved to stray;
  A feast for retrospection!

Snug in the coach's corner placed,
How fondly my "mind's eye" retraced
  The spot where I was going;
The house, its door, the bowling-green,
The stables, and the wood scarce seen,
  All, all, in memory glowing.

"Yet ah!" sigh'd I, "Fate would not spare
Him who first bade me welcome there,
  And touch'd my feelings nearly;
Still there are Brothers, longer known,
With ages closer to my own,
  Whom I regard most dearly."

Arrived at length, within those bounds
Where Taste now adds, throughout the grounds,
  To nature's rich vagaries,
Cried I, "at Mulgrave, all I see
  Has changed, save Mulgrave's Lord to me,—
  His kindness never varies."

"The House, a castle grown I find;
Before it, was, before, behind;
  The bowling-green has vanish'd;
Stables unstably have retired,
And woods on woods are now admired,
  Which, erst, from sight were banish'd.'

The Landscapes of this wide domain,
Tried I in dogg'rel to explain,
  To epic length 'twould spin it;
But though the Castle boasts, no doubt,
Such various beauties from without,
  Still greater charms are in it:

For there the Noble Owners sit;
The Host replete with social wit,
  The Hostess with good-nature;
But, named I all who, there, delight,
'Twould only be, in full to write
  Their kindred's nomenclature.

Then Eighteen Hundred Ten and Nine,
The joy Thou givest this breast of mine,
  All transient joy eclipses;
My daily thoughts will turn to Thee,
And daily dedicated be
  To Friendship, and the Phippses.

Some remarks having been made regarding the farce entitled 'X. Y. Z.' in the continuation of the Biographia Dramatica, about this time, 1820, Colman replied to them by the following angry observations:

"He states under the article X. Y. Z., a farce which I wrote, and produced in Covent Garden, that 'it was alleged in the Court of Chancery, that a contract subsisted between Mr. Colman and the other proprietors of the Haymarket theatre, that Mr. Colman should write only for that House:' the continuator then adds, 'the proprietors of Covent Garden, not knowing of this contract, [observe, he here leaves out the word *alleged*, and assumes the positive existence of such a contract] 'had engaged Mr. Colman to furnish them with a farce; nor were they served with notice of such contract before they had actually advanced £200. to Mr. Colman, and made preparations for acting the piece.

" If this do not strongly imply (to say the least) that, as a furnisher of farces, I swindled my old and esteemed friends, Messrs. Harris and Co., out of two hundred pounds, then I am utterly ignorant of the English language.

" Now, the simple fact is, that, during a Chancery suit, it was unexpectedly contended on one side, and denied on the other, that I had made such a contract; and the Chancellor laid an injunction upon the farce, *pendente lite*, as is common in similar cases; which injunction was ultimately withdrawn, and the farce declared to belong to the Covent Garden proprietors, at whose theatre it is now acted.

" I beg pardon for this digression: it fell in my way, and I have silently laboured under this terrible article of X. Y. Z. since the year 1812, when the continuator sent me his book as a compliment. He meant me neither injury nor offence; nor do I mean him any; but, worthy man, he has a devil of a knack at 'marring a curious tale in the telling!"

George Colman was appointed to the situation of Lieutenant of His Majesty's Guard of Yeomen of the Guard, on the 13th of May, 1820. The Commission of the Lieutenant, as well as the Exons, is purchased under the authority of an Act of Parliament; but it was given to Colman by George the Fourth, being vacant under peculiar circumstances.

On the first birth-day that Colman attended officially in full costume, His Majesty seemed much pleased to see him, and observed " Your uniform,

George, is so well made, that I don't see the hooks and eyes." On which, Colman, unhooking his coat, said, " Here are my eyes, where are yours ?"

Turning round to the Duke of Wellington (who was gold-stick in waiting), the King remarked, " George Colman puts me in mind of Pam :" " If that is the case," exclaimed Colman, " The only difference between the Duke of Wellington and me, is, that I am the Hero of Loo—He, of Waterloo !"

Colman afterwards obtained permission to sell this appointment, which he asked as a matter of favour, not having himself purchased it; and Sir Robert Gill was appointed to succeed Colman as Lieutenant of the Yeomen of the Guard on the 6th of September, 1831.

At the coronation of His Majesty George the Fourth, it was reported that the honour of knighthood had been conferred on George Colman. On this rumour, the following lines were written by John Taylor:

So, Colman has been dubb'd Sir Knight—
The gracious Monarch's boon was right,
  The bard deserves it well;
For those who know this bard must know
With loyalty his feelings glow,
  As all his efforts tell.

Prince Harry, when he gained the crown,
Cast all his late companions down,
  Discarding e'en Old Jack;
Not all his humour could avail,
Not all the prompt facetious tale,
  Not all his merry clack.

Unlike the Monarch of the play,
When Princely George gain'd regal sway,
  Aloof from churlish pride,
Those who had shared his festive hour,
He kept to profit by his pow'r,
  Nor one was thrown aside.

Our Monarch's set, indeed we find
Were comrades of a diff'rent kind
  From Hal's unlicensed band,
For men with wit and knowledge stor'd
Partook of George's princely board,
  Men, who adorn the land.

Hence Colman, just as ready, gay,
As Falstaff in each matchless play,
  With all his sportive vein,
Falstaff in head, but not in heart,
May well, without mean courtly art,
  His Sovereign's smile retain.

But let not e'en that Sovereign's smile
Thee Colman, from the Muse beguile,
  And make thee slight her praise;
For justice, gratitude, must own,
She gave thee a Parnassian throne,
  And crown'd thee with her bays.

We here resume Colman's own narrative of some passages in his life:

"I have heretofore treated of 'Two Parsons,' when I gave the reins to my curvetting Muse, in her poetical Vagaries, but the present incidents are of a different description; and end, although they begin gaily, in a 'Story of Woe.'

"The Reverend Robert Lowth, son of the venerable and learned Dr. Lowth, the deceased Bishop of London (whose English Grammar is one of the standard

books in our philology), received the rudiments of his classical education, I believe, at Winchester School; and was one among a few contemporaries in whose society I most delighted, while at Christ Church.

"From the period of my quitting the Oxford University in 1781, till 1822, a considerable lapse of time, and on my part, as far as it concerned my regard for Lowth, *hiatus valdè deflendus*, I had no communication with him personal or epistolary. In the last-mentioned year, however, he called at my house, and on returning home to dinner, one day, after a walk, I found the following letter from him; he had written it in my absence, and left it on my table. Its unaffected and lively style proves that age had not altered the good nature, nor impaired the pleasantry, which formerly made him so popular and beloved among the junior members of our college.

"DEAR COLMAN, August 16th, 1822.

"It may be some five-and-thirty years since we met,* and I believe as near forty years as may be, since I was promoted from my garret, No. 3, Peckwater, into your ci-devant rooms in the Old Quad: on which occasion I bought your things.† Of all your household furniture, I possess but one article, which I removed with myself to my first house and Castle

* My friend was here in error:—we had not met for nearly one-and-forty years.

† This purchase was called *Thirds*, and always at the same price, the buyer paying two-thirds of the money which it had cost the preceding tenant of the rooms for each article of furniture, &c.

in Essex, as a very befitting parsonage sideboard, *viz.* a mahogany table with two side drawers, and which still 'does the State some service,' though not of plate. But I have an article of your's on a smaller scale, a certain little flat mahogany box, furnished, partially I should say, with cakes of paint, which probably you overlooked or undervalued as a vade-mecum, and left. And, as an exemplification of the great vanity of over-anxious care, and the safe preservation, per contra, in which an article may possibly be found, without any care at all, that paint-box is still *in statu quo*, at this present writing; having run the gauntlet not merely of my bachelor days, but of the practical cruelties of my thirteen children, all alive and merry, thank God! albeit as unused, and as little disposed to preserve their own playthings or chattels from damage as children usually are, yet it survives! 'The reason why I cannot tell,' unless 'I kept it for the dangers it has passed.'

"Though I have been well acquainted with you publicly, nearly ever since our Christ-Church days, our habits, pursuits, and callings, having cast us into different countries and tracts, we have not, I think, met since the date I speak of. I have a house at Chiswick, where I rather think this nine-lived box is: and whether it is or no, I shall be very glad if you will give me a call to dine and take a bed if convenient to you; and, if I cannot introduce you to your old acquaintance and recollections, I shall have great pleasure in substituting new ones, Mrs. Lowth, and eleven of our baker's dozen of olive branches, our present complement in the house department; my eldest boy being in the West Indies, and my third having returned to the Military College last Saturday, his vacation furlough having expired. As the summer begins to borrow now and then an autumn evening, the sooner you will favour me with your company, the surer you will be of finding me at Grove House; the expiration of other holidays being the usual signal for weighing anchor and shifting our moorings to

parsonage point. I remember you, or David Curzon,* had among your phrases quondam, one, of anything being 'd—d summerly;' I trust however having since tasted the delights of 'the sweet shady side of Pall Mall,†' that you have worn out that prejudice, and will still catch the season before it flies us. Or give me a line naming a no distant day, that I may not be elsewhere when you call; and you will much oblige,

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOWTH."

N. B.—In your address to me, you must not name *Chiswick*, but Grove House,‡ Turnham Green, as otherwise it

* "Another clergyman and early college friend, whom I have seen but once since I left Oxford, and that was about four years after I had quitted it. I am happy to hear that he is still alive; he is a younger son of the late Lord Scarsdale, and resides, I am told, chiefly in Derbyshire."—G. C.

† Colman was then living in Pall-Mall.—ED.

‡ "This is the villa which, if I am not mistaken, formerly belonged to the well-known Humphrey Morris, a gentleman of large fortune, and thought to be, for more reasons than one, a very peculiar person. I remember seeing this place, and the then master of it, one morning, when I was a boy, by riding thither with a relation, a lawyer, who went there upon business. On entering the Court-yard, we were assailed by a very numerous pack of curs in full cry. This was occasioned by Mr. Morris's humanity towards animals: All the stray mongrels, which happened to follow him in London, he sent down to this villa, where they were petted, and pampered. He had a mare in his stables called *Curious*, who though attended and fed with the greatest care, was almost a skeleton from old age, being turned of thirty. Many of his horses enjoyed a luxurious sinecure. During summer, they were turned into his park, or rather paddock, at Chiswick, where in sultry weather they reposed beneath the shade of the trees, while a boy was employed to flap the flies from their hides. The honours shown by Mr. Morris to his beasts of burden were only inferior to those which Caligula lavished on his charger."—G. C.

goes into another postman's walk, who walks it back again to the office, and it does not reach me per Turnham Green peripatetic till the next day, which is *toute autre chose.*"

"Had a man been 'bearing fardels' for half a century, till his jaundiced mind could perceive nothing in this world but 'envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness,' such a kindly letter as the foregoing might present an antidote to his misanthropy, and bring back his affections to his fellows.

"I answered it immediately, telling my old friend how much he had gratified me, and how happy I should be in attending him, on any early day most convenient to himself; when he would perceive, no doubt, that I had not worn so well as my quondam table, his first parsonage sideboard; and that I was more damaged than the little paint-box, by the wear and tear which 'flesh,' less tough than mahogany, 'is heir to.'

"After refreshing my friend's memory, by touching on some particulars, which have already been mentioned, I informed him that I was, of late years, in the habit of suburban rustification; and that I passed a considerable part of my summers in a house where I was intimate at Fulham; whither I desired him to direct to me, as much nearer Chiswick than my own abode, being within a few hundred yards of his old family residence, where we last parted. Whenever I was at this place, I told him the avenue, and Bishop's walk, by the river side, the public precincts of the moated episcopal domain, had become my favourite morning and evening

lounge. I told him, indeed, merely the fact, omitting all commentary attached to it; for often had I then, and oftener have I since, in a solitary stroll down the avenue, thought of him, regretting the wide chasm in our intercourse, and musing upon human events. I have no copy of my own letter, which was written in the 'flow of soul,' and at the impulse of the moment.

"In a few days after his first letter, and my answer to it, I heard from him again, as follows:

"Grove House, Chiswick, Saturday 9 a. m.

"DEAR COLMAN, August 17th.

"'*Surgere diluculo saluberrimum est*,' but all general rules having their exceptions, so in my case of turning out on Wednesday morning. On seeing, from my up-two-pair-of-stairs bedroom, two active citizens in full march for a grove of Orleans Plum-trees at the bottom of the park, I forthwith added my grey camlet jacket and trousers to my flannel drawers and waistcoat, and finding my active citizen gardener already up, we soon reached the scene of action; but alas! not only were the birds flown, but my plums were diminished, though not twenty minutes from the skirmishers' forced march. So, being up, a most cogent argument, I thought I could not do better than work my passage back by a different route, which lay through an ozier bed to the river, glittering with all the gems of pearly dew, through which, being some acres of ground, I of course, got my feet as wet as heart could wish. To cut the story short, by changing cold water, or rather water-drenched worsted, for a hot foot-tub, and ditto bason of tea, I thought to bully the thing off, but it was not so to be bullied by a middle-aged gentleman; so, after dinner, I retired up stairs to bed; and to make some amends for my *diluculo* expedition, have never been

down stairs since. Having no personal interest with the dinner-bell, and living *à la Sangrado*, has so reduced my strength, that I dread the journey up and down again.

"But for this '*inter poculum et labra*,' it was my intention to have made you my first *poste restante*, with perhaps a walk down the old avenue, in my way to town, that identical day; and still hoping to accomplish three miles and back, I have hoped from day to day; but I cannot get in travelling condition, even for so short a journey. Therefore I hope you will send me word by my new Yorkshire groom lad, that you will take pot-luck with me, on Sunday, as the most likely day for you to suburbize. You will meet nobody but ourselves, and perhaps Lord Oxford, who having been laid up this week past, may not be able to come then.

"No time for this sheet, as the carriage is at the door, behind which Yorkshire is to have a cast to Hammersmith pump, whence he foots it to you, and returns with your answer forthwith; but should you not be at Fulham Lodge, I have desired that this may be forwarded to you by the first Twopenny, in hopes of its still reaching you in time for Sunday, at six or half-past six o'clock dinner.

"Thank God, as I often have, that I am not 'set on a pinnacle, to cast myself down,' as poor Lord Londonderry has done!* on which subject, *nunc, et semper, prescribere longum est.*

Yours, Dear Colman, very truly,

ROBERT LOWTH."

"From the playfulness of this letter, continued through three pages, it then appeared to me that my

* The deplorable death of the Marquess of Londonderry, Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, had recently occurred.

friend had been labouring under no very formidable, though an acute attack, brought on by accident; and that four-and-twenty hours more rest would considerably advance his convalescence; I therefore answered, that I anticipated great pleasure from dining with him. But I have since had reason, melancholy reason, to reflect, that while giving this cheerful account of himself, he was still in bed, at least in his bed room, 'reduced in strength, and 'dreading the journey down stairs, and up again;' that this was inconsistent with his inviting me to dinner on the Sunday, the very next day; and that he was much too sanguine, and perhaps fevered in no trifling degree, when he wrote to me.

"Early next morning, his daughter, (his eldest, I believe,) Miss F. Lowth, favoured me with a few lines, which I omit, from fear of displeasing a young lady by publishing her note, which would, however, be very pleasing to others; for there are traits in it so amiably feminine, so unconsciously indicative of a good heart, and of daughterly love, that it would do honour to her if I published it; as it would to her mother, who, in a moment of alarm, was particularly anxious, as it appears by the note, to show marked attention to one whom her husband regarded.

"My partial friend had, I conjecture, told his family that he should feel pleasure in receiving the companion of his youth, and they were all prepared to welcome me with more than common kindness; a sure proof of their domestic concord and affection.

"Miss Lowth's letter informed me, that her father,

since the foregoing day, had become extremely unwell, that bleeding and cupping had been prescribed, the most perfect quiet enjoined; and that, of course, our proposed party must be deferred. This was sent to me without his knowledge, he was too ill to be disturbed about such trifles as the postponement of a dinner, or to be talked to upon any subject whatever.

"I began now to be seriously apprehensive for him, and the '*inter poculum et labra*,' which he had so sportively quoted, only the day before, came over my mind like the raven's croak upon the ear of superstition.

"On the following day, my son rode to Grove House, at my desire, to make inquiries. The family seemed in some confusion, for he rang repeatedly at the gate, which was at last opened by an elderly female, from whom he understood that her master was no more! but her account, it seems, was given in a hurried manner, and was so perplexed and equivocal, that I still flattered my wishes, and would not believe the very worst. For two days afterwards I remained, therefore, in suspense. On the third, I received the following most painful confirmation of all my fears.

"The Grove, Chiswick, August 22, 1822.

"SIR,

"I am requested by Mrs. Lowth to apprise you, should you not already have heard, of the decease of Mr. Lowth, which took place on Sunday evening. He became much worse on the Sunday morning, and his constitution being unable to bear the necessary depletion, he sunk in the

evening, at eight o'clock. The suddenness and severity of the blow must plead her apology for not giving you earlier information of the distressing event*. His remains are to be interred in the family vault at Fulham, on Monday morning, at ten o'clock.

I am, Sir, your most obedient,
J. C. BADELEY."†

"It would be difficult to describe my emotion, when reading the foregoing letter. Seldom have I felt the trite ethics on the fragility of human hopes, the evanescence of life's joys, and of life itself, more bitterly illustrated than by this affecting occurrence.

"A fortnight had not gone by, since in the enjoyment of health, and gaiety of spirit, he had sought me out, to court a renewal of our intimacy; and on the evening of the very day appointed for our meeting, after one-and-forty years of separation, nay, at the very hour when I had pictured to myself our sitting at his hospitable board, with his wife, and his 'eleven olive branches,' smiling around us, listening to our talk of former times, and happy to see us happy; even at that impending hour of social reason's happiness, did the awful decrees of Heaven snatch him from friendship, from domestic love, and from this world for ever!

* "I have never had the honour of being introduced to Mrs. Lowth, but meaned to have paid my respects to her, in due time, after this sad event. I have since considered, that, under all the combined circumstances, our interview would uselessly excite the most afflictive recollections, and, therefore, abandoned my intention."

† Doctor Badeley of Half-Moon Street, a Fellow and Censor of the Royal College of Physicians.

" I continued at Fulham Lodge, which is nearer, in a direct line, to the Church, than to the Bishop's Palace, and the ' old avenue.' On Monday, the adjacent steeple gave early notice of the approaching funeral; religion and sorrow mingled within me, while the slow and mournful tolling of the bell smote upon my heart. Selfish feelings, too, though secondary, might now and then obtrude, for they are implanted in our nature. My departed friend was about my own age; we had entered the field nearly at the same time; we had fought, indeed, our chief battles asunder, but in our younger days, he had been my comrade, close to me in the ranks; he had fallen, and my own turn might speedily follow.

" My walk next morning, was to the sepulchre of the Lowths, to indulge in the mournful satisfaction of viewing the depository of my poor friend's remains. It stands in the church-yard, a few paces from the eastern end of the ancient Church at Fulham. The surrounding earth, trampled by recent footsteps, and a slab of marble which had been evidently taken out, and replaced, in the side of the tomb, too plainly presented traces of those rites which had been performed on the previous day.

" For several mornings, I repeated my walk thither; and no summer has since glided away, except the last, when my sojournment at Fulham was suspended, without my visiting the spot, and heaving a sigh to the memory of Robert Lowth !"

CHAPTER XIII.

1822—1836.

Extensive alteration of Drury Lane Theatre—Samuel Beazley—Opening Address by Colman—Colman appointed Examiner of Plays—Definition of the term 'Burletta'—The Duke of Montrose—Sir William Knighton—Shiel's Alasco—Kelly's Reminiscences—Humane Letter of George the Fourth—The Bishop of Chichester and aged O'Keefe—Bish—Stephen Price—The Haunted Inn—The Duke of York—Illness of Colman—Letters to Edmund Byng—Colman's Receipts—The Property Club—Theodore Hook—Arnold's Remarks on Colman—Kemble—Boaden—John Taylor—Woodfall—Colman's last moments.

THE interior of Drury Lane Theatre, under the management of Elliston in 1822, was almost demolished, and within the short space of sixty days, was reconstructed, a most extraordinary achievement, and which seemed like the work of a magician.

This alteration was effected by Mr. Beazley, the architect of many theatres*: but the interior of the new-modelled Drury exceeds every other in elegance, although its size is too large to enable the major part of the audience to enjoy the performances. The opening pieces were Sheridan's School for Scandal, and O'Keefe's Poor Soldier, when, after the company had presented themselves, and sung the national anthem, Terry, who made his first appearance at that theatre on that night as Sir Peter Teazle, came forward, and delivered the following address written by Colman:

* The first English Opera House, which was burnt in 1830, the present English Opera House, the Theatres Royal Dublin and Birmingham, the St. James's Theatre, were all built by Mr. Beazley, and he has been concerned in the improvements and decorations of most of the metropolitan places of amusement.

Since theatres so oft, in this, our time,
Are launch'd upon the town, with solemn rhyme,
Thoughts ready-made, to fit the theme, are found,
Like last year's tunes on barrel-organs ground;
And poets furbish, in the bathos style,
Old tropes and figures for the new-built pile.
The Sock and Buskin named—the Muses follow;
The opera—always prefaced with Apollo.
But, Architecture's claims when we enforce,
Vitruvius and Palladio come of course;
'Till after a long dance through Greece and Rome,
To Dryden, Otway, Congreve, getting home,
We end with Shakspeare's ghost, still hov'ring on our dome!
Alas! how vainly will our modern fry
Strive with the old *Leviathans* to vie!
How foolishly comparison provoke,
With lines that Johnson writ, and Garrick spoke.
Abandon we a strain without more fuss,
Which, when attempted, has abandoned us;
And let us guiltless be, however dull,
Of murdering the "sublime and beautiful."
Thus, then,—our Manager, who scouts the fears
Of pulling an Old House about his ears,
Has spared, of our late Edifice's pride,
The outward walls—and little else beside;
Anxious has been *that* labour to complete,
Which makes *magnificence* and *comfort* meet;
Anxious that multitudes may sit at ease,
And scantier numbers in no desert freeze;
That ample space may mark the liberal plan,
But never strain the eyes or ears *of man*.
Look round and judge;—his efforts all are waste,
Unless you stamp them as a work of taste;
Nor blame him for transporting from his floors
Those old offenders here—the two stage doors—
Doors which have, oft', with burnish'd panels stood,
And golden knockers, glitt'ring in a wood;
Which on their posts, through every change remained,
Fast as Bray's Vicar, whosoever reign'd;
That served for Palace, Cottage, Street, or Hall—
Used for each place, and out of place in all;
Station'd, like watchmen, who in lamp-light sit,
For all the business of the night unfit.

So much for visual sense:—what follows next
Is chiefly on the Histrionic text:—
And our Adventurer has toiled to store
His list of Favourites, with some Favourites more—
Sought planets roving from their former sphere,
And fix'd, as stars, the brilliant wanderers here;
To Drury's luminaries *added* light,
And made his sky with constellations bright.
Rich the repast,—and may, we trust, ensure
The custom of the scenic epicure?
E'en I, although among the last and least,
May pass, perhaps, as garnish to the feast.

As for our living dramatists,—if now
The genuine bays disdain to deck their brow,
Still they can please; and, as they're dull or clever,
You patronize, or damn, the same as ever;
For each degree of talent, after all,
Must *here*, by your decision, rise or fall.

In October 1823, a new interlude was produced at Drury-lane Theatre, with a very bad title, 'Stella and Leatherlungs.' We believe it to have been a hasty production of George Colman, and was written at the earnest desire of Elliston, to exhibit the extraordinary precocious powers of Clara Fisher.

On the 19th of January, 1824, Colman was appointed "Examiner of all Plays, Tragedies, Comedies, Operas, Farces, Interludes, or any other entertainment of the stage, of what denomination soever," in the room of John Larpent*, Esq. deceased; a very proper appointment, for no one was better acquainted

* Mr. Larpent, who had for some years held the post of Reader to the Lord Chamberlain's department, was a strict Methodist. After his death, the numerous Manuscripts of Dramas, which ought to have been kept in the archives of the Chamberlain's Office, were exposed to public sale!

N.B.—Two guineas had been paid to the Licenser, for every piece, song, &c.

with the state of the drama than Colman. When Colman took office, there happened to be a strong contest between the major and the minor theatres; and as several of the latter performed regular dramas under the general title of burlettas, the licenser was somewhat puzzled. We however give the definition of burletta in Colman's own words. He alludes first to some burlettas performed under the direction of Dr. Arnold at Mary-le-bone Gardens:

"My father, who was a friend to the Doctor, allowed him to act a Burletta there, called 'The Portrait,' which he (my father) had taken from the *Tableau Parlant* of the French. This piece was received in its day for what it professed to be, that is, for a burletta; there was no doubt then of what it was: but ask now, what is a burletta, and you will be told it is one thing at one theatre, and another at another. This disagreement arises from the Minor theatres, which are restricted in the nature of their entertainments, having made it, *gradatim*, a different kind of drama from what it was when first performed in this country, and thereby it is contended, by the managers of the great theatres, that they go beyond the limits of their general licence. The clashing interests, therefore, of the greats and smalls, under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain, occasioned this affair, among others, to be canvassed before the Privy Council; who called in the Crown lawyers on the subject; and the Crown and other lawyers, after investigating the question of 'what is a burletta?' solved it much after the manner of the respondents to Scrub in The Beaux Stratagem, 'their answer was, they

could not tell;' and they, the lawyers, replied, they knew nothing of the matter.

" Thus a point, once thought easy, was plunged into difficulty, and thus do people grow wiser and wiser every day, till at last they acquire the sapience of that ancient philosopher, who was candid enough to say, 'all I know is, that I know nothing.' I had imagined that, in a case like this, the lawyers might have formed an opinion upon the evidence of veterans of the stage, who could tell what was considered to be a burletta in earlier days, and have allowed weight to old precedent and custom, in deficiency of a minute definition, and of a positive law; but here I was mistaken, and such veterans never were interrogated.

" For my own part, the rooted notions of an old theatrical stager make it difficult for me to consider a burletta otherwise than as a drama in rhyme, and which is entirely musical; a short comic piece, consisting of recitative and singing, wholly accompanied, more or less, by the Orchestra. The most conspicuous burlettas are 'Midas,' 'The Golden Pippin,' 'Poor Vulcan,' 'The Portrait,' and perhaps a few others. All these come under the description of rhyme, recitative, and vocal and instrumental music, with nothing spoken; the only exception which I have observed, is Tom Thumb, altered from Fielding's burlesque tragedy, with the addition of songs. In this piece there is partly dialogue without music; and I have been recently informed from good authority, that it was inadvertently announced by the managers of Covent Garden theatre (who thus produced it) as a burletta, and that they

repent of having afforded this precedent, and a greater argument for latitude to their minor rivals. That the minor theatres supposed a burletta to be what I conceive it, is pretty evident from their practice, since they were allowed to exhibit this kind of entertainment. They first performed it according to the definition I have just given. They then made their recitative appear like Prose, by the actor running one line into another, and slurring over the rhyme; soon after, a harpsichord was touched now and then, as an accompaniment to the actor; sometimes once in a minute; then once in five minutes; at last, not at all; till in the process of time, musical and rhyming dialogue has been abandoned; and a burletta now, if it be one, is certainly an old friend with quite a new face. Much of the perplexity has been created by the term itself being a coinage (evidently from the Italian), and we have therefore no decided definition of it, from any authority. Johnson has not the word in his Dictionary, but he has burlesque, which he derives from the Italian *burláre*, to jest; and define it as jocular, tending to raise laughter by unnatural or unsuitable language or images. Neither does the word find a place in Baretti's Italian and English Dictionary. Baretti however has *burla*, a jest and banter; *burlare*, to laugh at, to banter; *burlatore*, a banterer; *burlesco*, *burlevole*, facetious, merry, comical. The silence of lexicographers on one hand, and the nonplus of lawyers on the other, put the Lord Chamberlain of the day in a dilemma; but as burlettas had been allowed in the first instance to the minor theatres, and as he could not obtain any proof, or

professional opinion that the performances in question were not burlettas, he continued to license them. His successor, His Grace the Duke of Montrose, modified this matter, which was done to his hand, by granting licences for what is 'called by the Manager, a burletta;' and, providing it be in legal acceptance a burletta."*

The following letter was addressed by Colman to Sir William Knighton.

"5, Melina Place, Westminster Road,
29th February, 1824.

"Mr. Colman presents his compliments to Sir William Knighton, and is much gratified by Sir William having expressed a wish to see his short remarks on 'Alasco,' a copy of which he has now the pleasure to enclose.

"Although the ferment of the times has greatly subsided, still plays which are built upon conspiracies, and attempts to revolutionize a state, stand upon ticklish ground; and the proposed performance of such plays is to be contemplated with more jealousy when they pourtray the disaffected as gallant heroes and hapless lovers. Thus drawn, *ad captandum vulgus*, their showy qualities and tender distresses of the heart throw a dazzle and an interest round their sedition, while they preach up the doctrine that government is tyranny, that revolt is virtue, and that rebels are the righteous.

"'Alasco,' in the tragedy of the same name, is a character of the above description, and Walsingham is set up against him as a contrast. Whenever these two gentlemen meet

* 'Providing it be in legal acceptance a burletta.' What a judgment for a Lord Chamberlain! In other words, 'I will license a tragedy, comedy, play, opera, or farce, as a burletta, provided you so call it; and leave you to defend your right against any injured or supposed injured party, who may choose to risk the hazard of the expense of a legal investigation, or, what is worse, of being hooted or pointed at as an informer.'

there is an effusion of clap-trap sentiments between them, in the alternate support of loyalty and radicalism; and they *prône* in a *pro* and *con* dialogue, vying with each other, speech for speech, by turns, like a couple of contending swains in an eclogue. In respect to their good and evil influence over an audience they are the Messieurs Bane and Antidote of the tragedy; and from a tragedy that needs so much counter-poison, for the chance only of neutralizing its arsenic, the deducement to be made as to its dangerous tendency is very obvious.

"It is my opinion that the objections against acting this play may be removed by the erasures which I have made; in which, should the managers think proper to acquiesce, I will (on their altering the MS. and again placing it in my hands) submit the play to the Lord Chamberlain for his licence.

GEORGE COLMAN."

"February 1824.

"The foregoing summary remarks were written by me, as Examiner of Plays; and I communicated them to Mr. Charles Kemble, one of the managers of Covent Garden Theatre, when the tragedy of 'Alasco' was under my official consideration. G. C."

Colman's object in forwarding the above criticism to Sir William Knighton is evident; he wished it to meet the eye of his Royal Master, and doubtless his desire was fulfilled. The tragedy of 'Alasco' was not the best of Sheil's productions.

When Michael Kelly was about the publication of his Memoirs, he was anxious to dedicate the work to the King (George the Fourth), and begged of Colman to solicit his Majesty's permission to do so. Colman accordingly addressed the annexed letter to Sir William Knighton.

"DEAR SIR WILLIAM, "2nd December, 1824.

"I was told yesterday at Carlton House, where I called in hopes of the pleasure of seeing you, that you were in the country, and that the time of your return to town was uncertain. I therefore direct this and the accompanying packet to Hanover-square, wishing it may reach you soon, as it will be seen by Kelly's letter enclosed, that expedition is desirable, on account of treating with the bookseller, which treaty I will endeavour to postpone till you are kind enough to let me hear from you. I saw Kelly immediately after I left you, and told him that my own impulse induced me to caution him on the business in question. He appears to me loyal even to enthusiasm; and in common with all those of right feeling, who have the honour and happiness to experience the kind-hearted consideration of our Gracious Master, most gratefully attached. He told me that he would, at my desire, send me copies of everything he proposed publishing relative to the King, and would abide by my opinion as to alterations, omissions, &c. In consequence I have received from him the papers which I now forward to you, and will thank you for your sentiments upon them at your earliest convenience.

"Kelly is extremely anxious to dedicate his book to the King, and as Irishmen are always making blunders, he speculates upon obtaining his wish through so poor a channel as myself. I have promised him to use any little interest I may possess among the higher powers to get this wish, or rather, humble petition, submitted to His Majesty; and if Sir William Knighton desires to know the person whom I would solicit on this subject, I say unto him, as Nathan said unto David, 'Thou art the man!' always provided, however, that such solicitation be not improper.

Believe me,
Dear Sir William,
With sincere esteem,
Most faithfully yours,
G. COLMAN."

"P. S.—As none of the contents of the diary mentioned in Kelly's letter are to be published, (except one article about a child called 'Julia,' which is in the paper now forwarded,) I do not transmit the said diary; indeed I am pledged to return it on this day.

The following letter from George the Fourth to Sir William Knighton demonstrates His Majesty's kindness of heart, and his recollection of his companions in early days. It is dated January 1826.

"A little charitable impulse induces me to desire you to inquire into the distressed circumstances of poor old O'Keefe, now ninety years of age, and stone blind, whom I knew a little of formerly, having occasionally met him at parties of my juvenile recreation and hilarity to which he then contributed not a little. Should you really find him so low in the world, and so divested of all comfort, as he is represented to be, then I conceive that there can be no objection to your offering him, from me, such immediate relief, or such a moderate annual stipend, as will enable him to close his hitherto long life in comfort, at any rate free from want and absolute beggary, which I greatly fear at present is but too truly his actual condition and situation.

"Perhaps on many accounts and reasons, which I am sure I need not mention to you, this had best be effectuated by an immediate application through you to our lively little friend George Colman, whose good heart will, I am certain, lead him to give us all the assistance he can, especially as it is for the preservation of one of his oldest invalided brothers and worshippers of the Thespian Muse.

G. R."

In reference to this subject, we here subjoin a letter from the Bishop of Chichester to Sir William Knighton.

"Chichester, Jan. 22, 1826.

"My Dear Sir William,

"The instant our service was over this morning, I hastened to communicate to poor O'Keefe the gratifying intelligence of His Majesty's bounty towards him. I cannot describe the gratitude and feeling with which he endeavoured to utter the language of his heart at so unlooked-for a mark of royal beneficence, nor can I adequately speak of the fervour he evinced in blessing his benefactor.

"With a truly honourable feeling, however, he desired me to communicate to you, for the information of His Majesty, that, in the year 1808, a pension was granted him by the Lords of the Treasury, of one hundred pounds per annum, which he still enjoys; and he stated that he had twenty-seven pounds a-year more, which he had been enabled to purchase in the funds from the produce of a benefit at one of the theatres a few years since. His Majesty's bounty, he added, would enable him to lay up a little store for an only daughter, who has been the solace and comfort of his declining years; but he almost doubted whether he could venture to hope it might be continued when his circumstances were known.

"The daughter, who is about fifty, is a most amiable and exemplary person. She devotes her whole time to her father, who is now in his eightieth year, and quite blind. You may probably remember a work published some years since, called 'Patriarchal Times,' of which she was the authoress. It was at the time universally read and admired.

"O'Keefe resides in a very small house in the suburbs of the city, which he and his daughter have occupied for eleven years; they are much respected and esteemed.

"Believe me, my Dear Sir William,
Yours very faithfully,
R. J. Chichester."

The following letter was addressed by Colman to Mr. Beazley on the subject of a comedy written by him, which was submitted to Colman as licenser:

"Sir, 28th April, 1829.

"I am sorry to be still under the necessity of trespassing on your patience till Tuesday next, when you may be assured that I will be explicit on the subject of your comedy. Believe me this delay in transmitting to you my opinion, arises from no false delicacy in communicating it; for, however contrary my sentiments may sometimes prove to the wishes of an author, it is my duty to deliver them candidly; and my rejection or reception of a play is a managerial matter of business. Some dry proceedings of the law, however, at present take up almost the whole of my time, and oblige me to ask your indulgence 'till the day above mentioned.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

G. Colman."

Colman wrote the subjoined letter to Mr. Yates on the same subject.

"My Dear Yates, Brompton, 27th April, 1829.

"I hear that Beazley complains I have reduced all his full grown angels into cherubims, *id est*, cut them in half, and left them neither heaven or cloud to rest upon; that his comedy will be sure to be d—d by the public, owing to the removal of some devilish good jokes by the Examiner; and further, that the Licenser's Deputy has taken most unlicensed liberties with the dramatist.

"Cannot you, my dear Fred. instruct him better? The play, you know, must be printed in strict accordance with my obliterations; but if the parts be previously given out, it will be difficult to induce the actors to preach from my text.

Truly yours,

G. Colman."

By this letter to Mr. Yates, it would appear, that although Colman felt compelled to eradicate such passages as he deemed improper for the stage, yet he ingeniously opens the door for the retention of the expunged matter. The reponsibility, be it remembered, however, was then removed from his own shoulders. This was not the only instance wherein this remedy was recommended by him.

The editor has some gratification and perhaps more vanity, in transcribing the following short note, commendatory of one of his own theatrical productions, from so celebrated a comic author as George Colman.

"June 26, 1828, Brompton Square.

"My Dear Sir,

"From the clever way in which the story is conducted, and the scenes of humour mixed with the horrors, I set down the 'Bottle Imp' as your production, and I hope, heartily hope, and think it will prove a strong hit.

"I would advise (but not as an Examiner) the omission of only one line.

Very truly yours,
George Colman."

Hackett, the American comedian, had been engaged by Mr. Bunn at Drury Lane Theatre. Being in want of a *new* part, he, or some one for him, had made an alteration in Colman's comedy of 'Who wants a Guinea?' substituting a character, Solomon Swap, for the original Solomon Gundy. As a matter of course this precious transatlantic amalgamation had to undergo the inspection of the Examiner of Plays, this examiner being the author of the comedy!

Here was a situation! Colman thus addressed Bunn, the ostensible manager, on the subject:

"SIR,

"In respect to the alterations made by Mr. *Hackett*, a most appropriate name on the present occasion, were the established play of any living dramatist, except myself, so mutilated, I should express to the Lord Chamberlain the grossness and unfairness of the manager who encouraged such a proceeding; but as the character of Solomon Gundy was originally a part of my own writing, I shall request his Grace to license '*the rubbish*' as you call it, which you have sent me.

Your obedient Servant,

G. COLMAN."

Colman was for many years honoured with the friendship of his royal highness the Duke of York. On the lamented death of the Duke, Colman thus wrote: "A recurrence to that event has casually presented itself here. I cannot turn periods upon it, and my pen must flow as my feelings dictate. Presumptive heir to the Crown, the nearest wish to the heart of the good Duke of York was the honour, the prosperity, and protracted life of our excellent Monarch: no brother could be more affectionate, no subject more faithful, no citizen more truly constitutional. His impulses were as kind and generous as ever glowed in a human breast: and his combined loyalty and patriotism were the result of sound sense, experience, and integrity.

"His admirable military discipline was marked by the veneration of the army, and his name will be

transmitted to posterity, under the emphatic appellation of *The Soldier's Friend.* His extensive support of Charitable Establishments was unavoidably conspicuous, but he hated ostentation; and his secret relief of distress exceeded his public contributions. In politics, as his bosom was without guile, he uttered his principles without reserve; and his firm, ingenuous character obtained, not merely the boisterous acclamations of the multitude, but the permanent esteem of all classes of Englishmen, who have an interest involved in our general welfare. In private life his manners were most amiable; too noble-minded to be vain of his exalted rank, too dignified to undervalue it, he was princely without pride, and familiar without derogation; hence it came, that those who had the happiness to associate with him, felt no restraint in his presence, but never lost sight of their respect; and all who knew him intimately, became steadily attached to him.

"Professions of acute grief from humble men, for the loss of princes, are suspected of hypocrisy; I shall not, therefore, attempt to describe my emotions, while I am offering this lowly tribute to the memory of my dear Illustrious Patron; whose goodness to me could only be surpassed by His Majesty's gracious beneficence."

Colman suffered greatly during the latter years of his life from repeated attacks of gout. The following letters, however, addressed by him to his friend, the Hon. Edmund Byng, prove that he would not permit the disorder to interfere with the pleasantry of his pen.

" April 10, 1823.

" Your letter reached me on the 2nd, while labouring under a furious attack of the gout, and between pain and some little business, I have been unable to send you a line sooner. This same gout comes like a bully and a coward; assaulting us more as we grow older and are less able to resist him; but I had no need of such a mandate of my own mortality, to excite my sincere sorrow for the declining state of poor Lady Torrington. Recollections of the many happy days I have passed with her and your excellent father, for both of whom I had the greatest regard and respect, are among those 'pleasures of memory' which are most dear to me. Dear, however, as such pleasures are, there is a tinge of melancholy in them."

" My Dear Edmund, 16th June, 1823.

" Heaven grant that your talking of Mother Carey's Chickens may not be ominous! for they are birds of evil prognostick to us sea-faring-men: and I am press'd on board a ship; must sleep at Gravesend (an ill-boding name for a town) on Wednesday, and be at the Nore on Thursday next. Pray for me! my life is insured, but I cannot swim. After my return, if so the Fates permit, let us meet, here, or wherever you will.

Ever yours, G. C."

" My Dear Edmund, 18th November, 1823.

" Under the head of Praise-worthy Projects frustrated, please to set down my starting for Fulham on Sunday, too late to call on you in my way thither, as I intended. Many thanks for your letter, and the enclosed portrait, which I had seen before in the Percy Anecdotes, with the *facetiæ* that belong to it. I hope and trust that you, and all friends whom it may concern, pronounce the jokes to be as unlike me as the features.

" At this critical moment, we are unequal to offering you a mutton-chop, being in the horrors of setting the house *to rights*, as good house-wives call it. Our cabin has been so much deranged, literally from top to bottom, that we are obliged to open the drains and rebuild the chimneys, which the high winds had almost blown away.

" No comedy this year! I will tell you why (giving you a full, true, and particular account of this, another *frustration*) when we meet.

Ever, affectionately, yours, G. C."

" My Dear Byng,

" I lament that the ' Law of Java' should be so imperative upon me, as to deprive me of the pleasure of attending you.

" The King commands its representation on Friday next; I shall, therefore, be in requisition both as bard and beef-eater.

Ever, truly, yours, G. C."

" My Dear Byng, " Melina Place.

" I have been disabled, till to-day, from thanking you for your very kind letter, by a compound of corporal ills, which is now so far simplified that I have *only* gout in one leg, and erysipelas in the other.

" Although I am extremely weak in body, your friendly hospitalities would be strengtheners of too much force for me at present—to say nothing of my being obliged, lame as I now am, to take the little food I can swallow in a reclined posture *more Romano*. There is no one whom I more willingly attend as mine host than yourself, both on the score of immediate pleasure and sentiments arising from recollections of the olden times. I rest, therefore, in the hope of growing stout, and when stout, of your being in the humour to invite me.

" In the course of *next* week I hope to prevail on you

and Cavendish Bradshaw, to partake of such fare, here, as a poor Lieutenant can offer:—

"Who rules o'er Beef-Eaters must himself eat Beef."

Ever yours, G. C."

"My Dear Edmund, 28th February, 1824.

"Clarges Street had not escaped my memory; although you had, by your own confession, forgot Melina Place; so that, in this particular, I am the most virtuous of the two; and now you shall

"Hear a sad story of woe."

"I was convalescent, and about to answer your letter, brought to me by *Filius*, when, lo! there came a second attack of the gout, much worse than the first, and the sharpest I ever experienced, which laid me flat again—that storm over, an intestine war arose; but, after all, I survive the tale, which will explain (and excuse, I hope) your not having heard from me sooner. At length I can sing, as they generally do, in the last scene but one of a pantomime,

"Hence grief and darkness, enter light and joy."

so come to your *maigre* dish here of beef, as soon and as often as you please. The sooner and the oftener, the happier you will make all here.

Ever yours, G. C."

"Brompton Square, 9th Jan. 1827.

"My Dear Edmund,

"After so long a notice of the commencement of our 'course of dinners,' I would not find you excuses for non-attendance, if the present state of my mind had not rendered me absolutely unfit for convivial encounters.

"I hate all affectation, and have no right to pretend to mourn more than my neighbours for a great national loss; but I was so truly and heartily attached to His Royal

Highness—I had so many reasons to love him, and to be grateful to him, that while the public is lamenting for the Prince, I feel the deepest sorrow on account of the man.

"But this must be the case with many (I think, indeed, with all), whom he admitted to his intimacy, and who well knew the affability of his manners, and the excellence of his heart. Both as to *me* and *mine*, the shock has been so severe, that we must take a little time before we shall be able to rally our spirits.

Yours, my dear Edmund,

G. COLMAN."

"Brompton Square, March 17, 1828.

"MY DEAR EDMUND,

"My son, your namesake, called on you to-day, and means to repeat his visit to-morrow, to explain to you how incapable I am of invoking the muse, while I am daily calling in physicians. For nearly the whole of the last six weeks I have been bed-ridden; attacked, first, by gout simple, then gout rheumatic, and last, not least, by tic doloreux, a most tedious and tormenting complaint—

'They best can paint it who have felt it most.'

"I am now, they tell me, recovering, but still in much pain, and not sufficiently convalescent to be visible. But as I live in hope of getting a little better every day, refresh my memory by telling me on *what* you wished me to write. Perhaps, in a few days I may be able to scribble a few nonsensical sentences.

Most truly yours, G. C."

"MY DEAR EDMUND, 17th April, 1828.

"I have knocked at the door, but unluckily there is nobody at home. In other words, I have beat my brains without success, for a subject on which I might scribble a few lines worthy of 'The Casket.' The truth is, that my

head is so full of autobiography, at this moment, and I am so pressed by my bookseller, who is outrageous at my delay, (which illness has occasioned,) that it is beyond my present power to abstract my thoughts from the work I have in hand. I regret this the less, as you tell me that the forthcoming poetical miscellany will boast almost all the talents of the age we live in; and among such a constellation my *twinkling* can be of no importance. At a more propitious season, when I have better health, and more leisure, you shall command me.

"I have been hunting in vain for a song which I scrawled about a year ago, and which I thought might answer the purpose.

"I cannot find it among my papers.

Yours, my dear Edmund, truly, G. C."

Colman received very considerable sums for his plays. For 'The Poor Gentleman,' and 'Who Wants a Guinea?' he was paid 550*l.* each, then the customary price for a five-act comedy; that is to say, 300*l.* on the first nine nights, 100*l.* on the twentieth night, and 150*l.* for the copyright*. For 'John Bull' (the most attractive comedy ever produced, having averaged 470*l.* per night for forty-seven nights), Mr. Harris paid 1000*l.*, and Colman afterwards received twice an additional 100*l.*, making 1200*l.* Mr. Harris was accustomed to pay an

* That is to say, 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per *night* for the first nine nights —100*l.* on the twentieth night—and 100*l.* on the fortieth night. This was the plan settled by Cumberland with Sheridan, at Drury Lane, and Harris at Covent Garden, for remunerating authors, instead of their (generally losing) benefits. The copyright was usually understood to be a distinct bargain—the proprietor of the theatre was to have the refusal, at any *bonâ fide* price offered by a bookseller.

author one or two hundred pounds above the 550*l.*, when the drama was very successful, which was the case with most of Colman's plays.

We have not any record to prove what sum was received for the farce of 'X. Y. Z.;' but it appears that Mr. Harris paid Colman 600*l.* for that, and patching up one or two things.

Alas! times are sadly changed for authors; but in those days there were no ruinous salaries, nor was the star system in vogue (the stepping-stone to the downfall of the drama of England). "*Live, and let live*," was then the actor's motto. At that period, an author could write for a company, but now it must be for an individual; and the individual is paid such a monstrous sum for his nightly performance that the manager is incapacitated from giving a proper remuneration to the author, whose brains have created that which the over-paid actor has to deliver. The evil does not rest here: to administer to these single enormous salaries, the humbler members of the profession are compelled to accept terms upon which it is barely possible to exist. No person of respectable education would now think of venturing on the stage as a means of livelihood, whatever might be his talents, for he would be certain to have to exert himself, merely to throw the proceeds of his labour into the already well-filled pockets of three or four actors. Under these circumstances, is it astonishing that the drama has declined? If the writers of the present day had Lewis, Johnstone, Quick, John Palmer, Fawcett, Munden, Bannister, Emery, Mrs. Jordan, Miss Farren, Mrs. Mattocks, Miss Pope, *cum*

multis aliis, TO ACT for them, there would be no outcry against authorship*. We should again see comedy on the boards; but the star system has driven away authors from the theatres, and extirpated the race of good second rate useful actors, without whose assistance no play can be properly represented. There is no rule without an exception, yet the truth of the foregoing remarks will be pretty generally acknowledged; and when the stars *cease* to *shine*, the managers will then have to recur to the invention of the authors; but, alas! it will be too late, for the *profession* of the *actor* is nearly extinct. The regiment is broken up, and there is no *depôt* for recruits.

As a manager, Colman the younger was liberal, affable, and assiduous; he assumed no affected reserve or superiority, but was with all his performers familiar and friendly, though he never lost sight of the respect due to the audience, and of the proper interests of the theatre; and though, as Sir Fretful Plagiary says, "he writes himself," yet he was exempt from the narrow jealousy too often prevalent in the literary character, and they who aspired at dramatic distinction were sure to meet at his theatre with counsel, assistance, and protection. A proof of his affability as a manager, was observable in a kind of theatrical club, which he introduced among his performers, the object of which was to procure proper refreshments for them between the acts, and to promote a general spirit of good-fellow-

* N.B.—Not one of these admirable performers were ever paid 'star salaries.'

ship and harmony. The club was called the PROPERTY Club, being held at the back of the stage, among the scenery and other theatrical matters, which, in the language of the green-room, are termed *properties*. The club commenced at the end of the second act of the play, and concluded with the fall of the curtain. The chair was taken in succession, and several gentlemen of acknowledged merit in the literary world were members of it. It had, moreover, the recommendation of being attended by the female performers, who imparted a softer charm to the spirit of gaiety, and prevented it from deviating into excess. We have been the more particular in describing the nature of this club, because it was rendered an object of public notice by the animadversions of some of the newspaper wits of the day, and, therefore, might possibly be subject to misconception, if not prejudice.

There was one female in the theatre who had obtained a *certain* degree of notoriety, of the name of Cuyler, who was not admitted to this club. She was a clever woman, and a smart writer. There had appeared in a public journal, occasional, and not rare, anecdotes, signed, "A Mouse in the Green-Room" *(a nony mouse)*. She was suspected, and we believe, proved to be the mouse; and, principally, on this ground, was excluded. But the mouse, though allowed no longer to nibble at the bread-and-cheese and oysters, was still apparently present in a corner. All that was said or done was regularly *reported*, with such additions as jealousy, rage, and disappointment

might naturally prompt a vexed and ill-regulated mind. These sarcasms, in fact, broke up a most agreeable, convivial, though temperate meeting.

In private life, Colman was social and intelligent, expert in the playful contentions of wit and humour, and perfectly ready at what is termed repartee; and when surrounded by men of acknowledged pleasantry, in the general skirmish of raillery, was never at a loss for a spirited retort; though it must be acknowledged, that in this kind of amicable skirmish he has been fairly foiled with his own weapons by Theodore Hook, the most rapid wit and humorist of the age.

It gives us pleasure to introduce here the following recollections of Colman by his early friend Arnold*:

It is painful to record the frailties and irregularities of men of genius, and still more so, to enumerate their vices. Of the latter, we have fortunately none to dwell upon; though of the former, the subject of these papers affords abundant examples. Though truth and justice, however, may claim much from the biographer, he is a churl indeed who drags forth from obscurity every petty fault and trifling error, who, vulture-like, preys on the dead carcase, and leaves the skeleton he himself has abandoned, an object of disgust and scorn to the world around him.

The lives of celebrated authors and wits are seldom fruitful of much anecdote. Wit is of too evanescent a quality to be often successfully recorded,

* Kindly supplied by Mr. Arnold, at my request.—Editor.

and the attempt to transfix it, too frequently by its failure resembles the efforts of the philosopher in Gulliver, who endeavoured to cork up a sun-beam in a bottle, while the lives of mere professional authors have generally been marked by alternations of success and failure, of patronage and desertion, of hope and disappointment, of affluence and penury.

The life of Colman, however, though subject to some vicissitudes, can never be said to have brought him acquainted with want, though frequently compelling him to struggle through fluctuations of fortune, the unavoidable results of his own indiscretion, and the ruinous vanity of apeing the style and expenses of many associates far above him in rank and fortune. The keenest censure, however, must admit that this fault, unjustifiable as it was, arose out of an ambition to emulate the gentlemanly character; and when the disadvantage of his birth, and the reckless inadvertencies of his early life are taken into the scale, even censure must be silent, and nothing beyond the honest plea of liberality be heard in his requiem. So far the labour of a biographer would be found easy and rapid enough; but the ghost of George Colman, autocratically nicknamed "the younger," could he "revisit the glimpses of the moon," would scarcely thank the man who passed over his name with notice so slight and favourable: his object, through life, was distinction and notoriety, and he certainly was not nice, at any period of it, how that illegitimate fame was acquired.

For the reputation of a wit, Colman laboured with unwearied assiduity, and alike sacrificed a friend, or

provoked an enemy, by his efforts to obtain it. Notwithstanding this undignified ambition, with high spirits, a natural vein of humour, and a command of language which embraced a happy knack of playing upon words with that ludicrous association of things apparently opposed to each other, (which has been one of the definitions of wit, but which is in fact the very essence of a pun, and which our neighbours call a *calembourg*, or in better words a *jeu de mots*, in contradistinction to a *jeu d'esprit*;) with such qualifications for an agreeable companion, with the perfect manners and habits of a gentleman, with an excellent memory, and the all but self-acquired knowledge of classical and modern languages, it can be no wonder that his society was sought, his talents appreciated, and his fame extended.

Although Colman was more nearly allied to the character of a punster than that of a wit, he was more than either, that of a humorist; he said thousands of good things which would entirely lose their poignancy by repetition, since the inimitable chuckle of his voice, and the remarkable expression of his countenance, would be wanting. The intelligent roll of his large and almost glaring eyes, with the concurrent expression of his handsome face, were ever the unerring *avant couriers* of his forthcoming joke; and if any thing curtailed the mirth he had provoked, it was the almost interminable laughter with which he honoured his own effusion.

Colman was wont to say of that truly honest and excellent man the late John Fawcett, that he marred his best stories by preliminary laughter, and so he

did; but no man ever solicited applause to his own joke with more vehement ecstacy than the author of the remark just quoted.

It must be reluctantly admitted that no man was ever more tainted by jealousy as an author and a wit (the late celebrated and justly celebrated author of the 'West Indian,' perhaps, alone excepted), than Colman. I never heard him speak of the dramatic works of Sheridan without some debasing alloy; he undervalued him as a wit, and somewhat more than hinted that he thought himself more than a match for him in convivial society. By way of *salvo*, indeed, he lauded him to the skies as an orator; but even as such, I once heard him conclude his eulogium by adding, "but *that* is not a gift, but an acquirement: any man of sound sense and ordinary information, with good nerves, may make an orator by practice and preparation;" still, if honest truth is to be spoken, the wit of Sheridan was a razor, compared to which our friend Colman's was a bludgeon. I have been many times in company with both, when Sheridan was silent, and not easily drawn out; on which occasions Colman would gnarl, and fret, and talk *at* him as if to rouse and provoke him to the combat; but this was in Sheridan's later days, when suffering under bodily as well as mental ailment. He once said, when Colman made a successful hit, "I hate a pun, but Colman sometimes almost reconciles me to the infliction."

In fact, the finest traits of Colman's wit, were, *sui generis*, puns. At the table of George the Fourth,

when Prince Regent, the royal host said, "Why, Colman, you are older than I am?" "Oh, no, sir," replied Colman, "I could not *take the liberty* of coming into the world *before* your Royal Highness!"

Though this is legitimately a pun, it is most assuredly a witty one; and this, like every thing else that can now be told of so distinguished a man, is probably stale; but all such happy sayings should be recorded in a professed life of the individual.

Colman's intimacy with Frank North was for many years notorious, and when that high humorist became Lord North, Colman was invited, with other friends, to his patrimonial estate, of which he had just taken possession. The party arrived while the new peer was absent, and were ushered into a room full of family portraits, amongst which was a whole length of the late celebrated lord, in his full costume, and a long white wand in his hand. Colman had committed, *selon son usage*, a slight debauch over night, had been roused before his time in the morning for this journey, and had been a dull companion on the way: one of the party now applied to him, as to the meaning of this white wand, which no one appeared to understand. After nodding his head for half a minute and affecting to rouse, he said, "Eh! white wand? don't know, egad! but suppose it represents the North Pole!"

On my venturing to express to Mr. Colman my regret that he had published his preface to the play of the 'Iron Chest,' much as I admired the terse and spirited language in which it was written, he observed, that I knew not the provocation he had

received. I said, I could not conceive a *motive* for intentional injury, which he had ascribed to the great actor. "Then," said he, "I can explain the motive." He now proceeded to state, that he had invited Kemble to dine with him in Piccadilly, in order to read to him the play then in progress, and nearly completed: that Kemble had winced several times at descriptions which appeared *personal*, and that seeing a gloom come over him, he had more than once laid aside the manuscript, and passed the bottle, with a view to change the current of his thoughts; that they had sat together during the whole of that night and the following day, drinking; occasionally dozing and reviving, and ultimately through the following night! that at about four o'clock of the following morning, they both woke up at one moment, and stared one another in the face, with a vacant and unmeaning glare; that he, Colman, after some minutes of such non-intellectual intercourse, under the influence of real nervous feeling, broke out into an ejaculation, "What do you stare at? your eyes are on fire! By God, Kemble, I believe you are the devil incarnate!" Kemble's answer was "Phoo, George, you 're a fool," and never spoke another word. A coach was ordered an hour or two after, and he returned home. To this strange circumstance Colman attributed Kemble's determination to sink his play.

Mr. Colman has related, in his notorious preface to the publication of the Iron Chest, the circumstances attending its 'getting up' at Drury Lane. As a drama, it is certainly an inferior production,

considering the well-earned fame of the author; but I, as one who anxiously attended the first performance, having been honoured by hearing the author read it in private, cannot but bear free and honest testimony of the fact, that Kemble literally *walked through the part*, as the theatrical phrase has it; undoubtedly suffering under severe illness, but as undoubtedly guilty, as a manager, for producing the play, and risking the reputation of an author under such circumstances. Still, nothing could justify the virulence and littleness of the personal attack on Mr. Kemble. It is, also, to be remembered that he took advantage of Mr. Kemble's absence on the Continent to publish this attack; and I had it from Colman's own lips, that many months elapsed before the author and actor met by accident in the Haymarket, when Colman, naturally doubtful of what might be his reception, was simply addressed by the 'last of all the Romans' with a smiling shake of the head, and a passing observation of "Ah, George, you're a sad fellow!" Colman told me this anecdote with an air of some triumph; but I thought Kemble had the 'vantage ground,' and that this sole notice of his virulent preface was rather 'in *pity* than in anger.' I believe they were very good friends afterwards.

I once carried to Mr. Colman a printed translation (by Mr. Benjamin Thompson) of the play of Count Beniowski, which struck me as containing the *matériel* of a fine drama. His answer was, "Thank you, Robin; but we all know the story of Count Beniowski, and if a play is to be

written on it, I fancy I may presume that I could make as good an original play as Kotzebue!" Now, as the immortal author of 'The Critic,' 'The School for Scandal,' 'The Rivals,' and 'The Duenna,' had lately adapted to the English stage a translation by the same individual, from the same eccentric but highly-talented author, and produced it under the title of Pizarro, with unprecedented success, I candidly confess that my friend Colman appeared, on this occasion, in my humble judgment, to exhibit somewhat more of vanity, than discretion or modesty.

We are all vain on some point or other; and selfishness, according to Rochefoucault, is the natural characteristic of every living being; but it is rare, I think, to find a man's vanity or selfishness discordant with his own interests. I remember when Mr. Boaden produced a successful play at the Haymarket theatre, called 'The Italian Monk,' I was on the stage on the following morning, when Colman came to rehearsal. He was out of humour evidently, and said during the *cutting* rehearsal, aside to the stage manager, but in my hearing, "D—n the fellow, we shall now be pestered with his plays, year after year!" "Good God!" thought I, "if this is the fate of a successful author, what chance have I?"

The play I have alluded to had a ghost in it, and Mrs. Gibbs looked and acted like an angel. It was of this very play that Mr. Boaden was *said to have said*, he had given Billy, (meaning William Shakspeare) the go-by; and which ever after obtained

for him the *sobriquet* of Billy-the-go-by-Boaden. Notwithstanding this harmless joke at Mr. Boaden's expense, he has since edited biographical records of Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble, which will furnish future dramatic historians with a fund of valuable anecdotes and information.

Poor John Taylor, familiarly called Jack, does any one remember him without feelings of regard, allied almost to affection? He hardly deserved the bitter sarcasm which Colman gave with more wit than feeling on a volume of poems sent to him by the author, with whom he had been intimate during the greater part of his life. Taylor's work bore the well-known motto,

> "I left no calling for this idle trade;"

to which Colman added,

> "For none were blind enough to ask thine aid."

Be it remembered that Taylor was an oculist; an immediate desce ndant of the celebrated Chevalier of that name and profession; but having little or no practice, the satire was the more poignant. Taylor of course soon heard of this cutting *jeu d'esprit*, and though he affected to laugh at it, was thought to feel a little sore. Certain it is, that in company with Colman in a large party, very shortly after, the word 'calling' happened to be incidentally mentioned by the latter, when Taylor, with great quickness, interrupted him and said, "talking of *callings*, my dear boy, your father was a great dramatic 'English merchant,' now *your* dealings are and will always continue those of a small *Coal-*

man; I think I had you there! What? have I paid you for your 'None were blind enough'—eh?" Colman was evidently hurt; not, as may be supposed, by the severity or wit of so outrageous a pun, but from the better feeling of regret that his own bitter sarcasm had reached the ears of his victimised friend. They continued, however, intimate associates for many after years.

Woodfall, the editor and printer of the Public Advertiser, in which the letters of Junius originally appeared, was an excellent dramatic critic, and a great friend of the Colmans, both father and son. It was his invariable custom to send a private letter, on the morning following the production of any new piece at the Haymarket Theatre, to Mr. Colman, criticising, with friendly zeal, the composition and the performance, and recommending such alterations, as none but a studious observer and sincere and experienced lover of the drama could have suggested.

In consequence of my father's avocations in the theatre, I was, at that time, a great hanger-on behind the scenes, and permitted at rehearsals; when, on several occasions, Mr. Colman handed these letters to my father (and one, I remember, to me), and I had then the opportunity of marking the distinction between candid, unimpassioned, and genuine criticism, and the frothy nonsense, which it has of late years been my destiny to peruse in a large portion of the critiques issuing from the modern press. If these letters are extant, and I can hardly suppose it possible that they can have been destroyed, I am convinced they would afford a valuable vademecum

to the rapid generators of theatrical productions of the present day.

After three successive disappointments of special appointments made by Mr. Colman, I was, on a fourth, admitted at three o'clock in the afternoon (his man had told me very confidentially, that his master had only just come home in the morning), after waiting two hours, to his bed-chamber. He made a thousand excuses: "Shocking hours," "high fever all night," "no sleep till long after day-light," &c. Before we had even entered on the business that carried me to Piccadilly, the servant again entered, and said, "the Honourable Mr. Skeffington, Sir, is come, he says, by your appointment at this hour." "Did you say I was at home?" "I said you was not, Sir; but the gentleman said he was sure I was mistaken, since he came by your own appointment, and produced a letter, desiring me to go in and *enquire*."—"Fool!" cried Colman, "go and tell him I will write to him to-morrow, and that I have just gone to bed with a dreadful tooth-ache!"

No one ever satirized his own prevailing weakness with better humour than he did in his prelude, entitled 'New Hay, at the Old Market;' afterwards cut down to the effective interlude of 'Sylvester Daggerwood.'

When the subject of this memoir took the name of George Colman "the younger," a paragraph appeared in one of the journals of the day, observing that "the present author has adopted the name and *sobriquet* of 'George Colman the younger.' Now,

all the world knows, that 'Pliny the younger' was a *natural* son, and George Colman's is, therefore, a 'natural' imitation." Colman was one day dining with us in Duke Street, when the subject of certain little nursery songs which had been published by my father, and which were become very popular, was introduced. Colman begged to hear some of them, and when we ascended to the drawing-room, his request was repeated and complied with. Amongst them was one—

"Goosey, goosey gander,
Whither would you wander;
Up stairs, and down stairs,
And in my Lady's chamber.
There sits an old man,
Who could not say his pray'rs,
Take him by the left leg,
And throw him down stairs."

To this superlative nonsense, my father had composed some beautiful music for three voices. Colman was so struck by it, that he requested its repetition more than once; kept on humming it (he could not sing a note) for some minutes after, and then asking for writing materials, rapidly wrote these lines, which fit admirably to the music:—

"Playfully the moon-beams,
O'er the waves did wander;
Hero o'er the Hellespont,
Was watching for Leander!
Winds, let the waves pass—
Let the waves pass by—
Give them not a tear drop,
Nor swell them with a sigh!"

Colman was fond of relating an anecdote of the

Cibbers, father and son. The latter, Theophilus Cibber, complained to his father that the public journals took every possible opportunity of abusing him. "Indeed," said Colley, "and you complain of it? Is not constant abuse better than fulsome and unmerited praise? Is not any notice at all preferable to contemptuous silence? Take my advice, 'THE,' when the critics cease to abuse you, write paragraphs to abuse yourself, and pay the editors and reporters to insert them." On this principle, excepting the fact of paying for it, Cloman appeared to act during the whole of his latter life. He could not endure obscurity, and would rather be abused, however scurrilously, than unnoticed. He *would be talked of:* whether critically, abusively, or kindly and applaudingly, was no part of his consideration; and this strange principle, however inconsistent with his well-known love of praise, lasted to the termination of his existence.

When he received the appointment of Examiner of Plays for the Lord Chamberlain (an office which, I presume, is authorised by law, though I could never find it in any Act of Parliament), his first acts were unquestionably those of petty tyranny, and his next, those of grasping cupidity. One of the most licentious writers of his age, he appeared anxious to out-Herod Herod in the exercise of his new authority.

The examiner who preceded him was a gentleman of the name of Larpent, understood to be a rigid methodist, and certainly a rigid censor of the dramas submitted to his perusal. But Mr. Larpent's objections never extended, in my recollection,

beyond any dangerous sentences which appeared to meddle in politics in his dangerous times, or with sentiments which were calculated to subvert morality, glaringly to shock decency, or, above all, to bring religion of any description into contempt. But, generally speaking, the good taste, or the precautionary judgment of modern managers has left little occasion for such critical censorship. Colman, therefore, in order to be *distingué*, was driven to close quarters; where nothing blasphemous, immoral, or political, was to be discovered, he marked his critical acumen by disavowing a lover's right to call his mistress "an angel;" an angel, he said, was a character in Scripture, and not to be profaned on the stage by being applied to a woman. As a manager, I never, myself, suffered the name of the Deity to be spoken; at least, never irreverently, or on slight occasions, and always expunged it from the manuscript; but Colman went a step further; he would not license an address to the Deity, in any shape whatever. "Oh, Providence!" he said, was an address to the Providence of God, and ought not to be allowed! The name of Heaven or Hell, he uniformly expunged. On one occasion he observed, "The phrase, 'Oh, Heaven!' 'Ye Heavens,' occurs seven times in this piece—omit them!"

I had a ludicrous collection of these official scrupulosities, which I entrusted to a friend for a parliamentary purpose, who never returned them to me. A damn was a pill he could never swallow, which may in part account for the volubility with which that and other such unmeaning expletives flowed

almost perpetually from his mouth. On one occasion, he expunged the exclamation of "*O, lud!*" He said it meant, "*Oh! Lord,*" which was inadmissible. On another, where a dandy had to say, while addressing the chambermaid, "Demme, my dear," he observed, "*Demmee* means *damn me*—omit it;" but puerilities of this sort, annoying enough to author, manager, and actor, were too numerous to be quoted or remembered.

In a drama, written by Mr. John Banim, the well-known author of the 'Tales of the O'Hara Family,' which was sent to be licensed, Mr. Colman objected to some lines to be chaunted in a foreign cathedral by monks and nuns. Independent of the real beauty of the poetry, the passage was essential to the conduct of the piece; and though of course addressed to the Supreme Being, the sacred name was no-where mentioned. I personally remonstrated with the Examiner on this subject, and he persisted that he was right. "No address to the Deity should be permitted on the stage!"

"This is very new doctrine," said I, "and you will find it rather difficult to enforce it. What say you to the perpetual and profane occurrence of singing 'God save the King' upon the stage?"

"Oh! that is an anthem," he replied.

"And what is this but an anthem, to which you object?" I answered.

"True," said he; "but though custom has sanctioned the one, I cannot sanction it as a precedent."

"Custom," I replied, "cannot sanction profaneness, if profane it be; but a solemn address to the

Deity, or a reverential use of his name, is not so. Even the name of God, though I always object to, and prohibit its familiar use, has been sanctioned on the stage for ages. Is it more profane for a modern than an old writer to use it?"

"That is begging the question," said Colman.

"Not at all," I answered; "the Lord Chamberlain has the power given to him by Act of Parliament, to prohibit the performance on the stage, within the limits of Westminster or any place where the King and his court may reside, of any tragedy, comedy, play, or farce, or other entertainments of the stage, which he, in his wisdom and discretion, may deem immoral, &c. Now this power he has delegated to you as a sort of deputy, by what authority of Parliament or power I have in vain attempted to discover."

Colman interrupted this rather savagely—"I am a sworn officer of the Crown, and no deputy of the Lord Chamberlain. My duty is to read all plays submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for representation, and to recommend the licence to be granted or withheld, according to my conscience."

"Then," said I, "let us suppose that the 'Merchant of Venice' had been never acted, and had been found like 'Vortigern and Rowena' (barring the forgery), and it were offered you as an Examiner, would you recommend to the Lord Chamberlain to withhold the licence, unless that splendid speech of Portia's on mercy, were mutilated? would you expunge the line,

'It is an attribute of God himself?'"

"Certainly, I should expunge it," he replied.

"Indeed! then why not expunge it now?" rejoined I.

"Because I don't know that I have the power: it was licensed so long ago.

"Never," I observed. "You forget that the *licensing* act is not a century old."

"True! You are sharp upon us: egad we must speak by the card, ey? but what I mean is, *licensed by custom*."

"Custom," I replied, "has nothing to do with the question. The wisdom or the alarm of the legislature gave to the Lord Chamberlain, for the time being, a power perfectly anomalous in the English constitution: a power, I admit, necessary at the time to be vested somewhere or in somebody. I am far from quarrelling with the law itself, though I have seen it most grievously abused; but the power was given, not for the future only, but for the past. The Lord Chamberlain has the power to prohibit the acting of any drama (within his very limited jurisdiction) which he may deem expedient to prohibit, and he has done so on occasions within my memory, and been obeyed. Now, I maintain that a law should not be partially administered according to the discretion or whim of a judge; but that it should be acted upon, if at all, with justice as well as judgment—with consistency as well as impartiality. The Lord Chamberlain has just as much and the same power to suppress the performance of the 'Merchant of Venice,' without such castration as I have alluded to, as he has to prohibit the

performance of the appropriate and beautiful anthem, which is our present bone of contention. Why does he not do so? or rather, why do not you hold it to be your duty, as 'Examiner of all Plays,' to point out to him this oversight?"

"You are perfectly aware," said the Examiner, after taking a prodigious pinch of snuff, "that a modern audience would not allow of any further meddling with the text of Shakspeare?"

"And now," said I rather triumphantly, "and now, my dear Sir, I have you in a cleft stick! you assert that your *conscience* and *your oath of office*, compel you to a rigid act of duty with us poor devils of managers and authors, but when you come to meddle with a mightier power than your master, you overlook or forget your 'sworn duty,' and confine the exercise of your 'little brief authority' to us unresisting mortals whom chance has placed within your official power."

Colman, to the best of my knowledge and recoltion, never had the magnanimity to give up an opinion once adopted and maintained—

> "For though convinced against his will,
> He held the same opinion still—"

that is, however convinced, he never admitted conviction, but still argued on the defensive, when he had lost all hope of victory. Like many a gallant general, he considered a skilful retreat at least equal to the triumph of conquest, and in this Parthian warfare, he had generally the good fortune to succeed.

The conversation to which I have just alluded,

and which I noted partly at the time, extended, I recollect, to some length. I cannot now recall all its bearings; I remember, however, that some little warmth was excited on both sides, and that it ended in cordiality, and his request that I would dine with him on the following day, which I accordingly did. On this occasion, it is impossible to forget that long after dinner, and after "beating about the bush" for a considerable time, the subject uppermost in his thoughts could no longer be withheld. I will not attempt to repeat an after-dinner conversation, in which, up to a certain period, he was always especially excellent, fully aware not only that he had now the best of the argument, for which he had evidently well prepared himself, and to which I am but too conscious I should fail in attempting to do justice. On the point, however, which appeared most to have provoked his defensive meditations, that in which I had accused him of suffering passages in old writers to continue on the stage which he would expurgate from the works of modern authors, he was copious and minute. He repudiated all idea of timorous jurisdiction or partiality towards an existing evil, and at length appealed to *my candour* whether it would be fitting in any man, especially himself, to disturb passages which had been long established and sanctioned on the stage, and many amongst them that had been duly licensed, in order to display a nicety of opinion, which would reflect as a reproach not only on those who had preceded him, but on the taste and judgment of the public also.

I had quoted very many passages from his own writings, which he acknowledged he should expunge from any play then placed before him; to which he merely replied, that it was no fault of his, but a neglect of duty of the then existing Examiner. I own I pressed him closely on this point, and inquired whether he had never suffered words and sentiments, and passages to be spoken on his stage which Mr. Larpent had objected to; to which, as I well remember, he replied,

"Why, I believe I must plead guilty to that."

"And what, should a present manager follow your example, would be the consequence?"

"None, that I know of; unless anybody should lay an information for speaking any thing unlicensed on the stage, in which case, you know the penalty."

"Not *unlicensed*," I said, "but *prohibited*, which is stronger. You do not then trouble your head with what passes in the theatre, or whether your excisions are attended to or not?"

"Not in the least; my duty is to object to every thing immoral, or politically dangerous. When I have marked my objections, the play is licensed, subject to the omissions of the passages objected to; beyond this I have nothing to do, or an Examiner would become a spy as well as a censor on the theatre."

"By your own showing then," said I, "the whole system of licensing is a mere bubble; I say nothing of the petty tax on the pocket of the proprietor, for the payment of a licence, though that is something (how originating by the bye, unless as

an *expedition* fee, I have never yet been able to discover). But to say that a Government has enacted a law (a salutary law, I admit, if properly administered), which ends in the unexercised power of any officer of the crown, and the payment of certain unauthorised *fees*, is, I repeat, a judicial anomaly in the English constitution! Suppose any manager were to refuse to pay the fee of two guineas for the licence to enact a certain drama, on what plea could you enforce it?"

"Custom, from time immemorial."

"That is, from the time of the tenth of George the Second, if I mistake not. About eighty or ninety years, though this is by no means clear to me: and I believe you would find it difficult to prove even *that* beyond the time of the late Examiner. However, though immemorial custom (the *lege non scripta*) is the common law of the land, I am not aware that customs not sanctioned, but arising out of an Act of Parliament, which may be fairly called recent, or can even be traced from the statutes at any time, can be effectively brought forward in a Court of Justice to prove a right to a claim which that act in no respect authorises. I beg you will consider this argument, which is entirely *general*, as in no respect referring to your particular case—for of this be assured, that I shall never be the person to moot the question, especially with the palpable and proved hostility of the present Lord Chamberlain against me* Still some independent individual

* His Grace the Duke of Montrose, of whom more hereafter.

may hereafter bring forward the question, which I must say your annoying prohibitions provoke; that is, your right, or rather, the Lord Chamberlain's right, to prohibit *passages* at all."

Here, as I well remember, and I did not wonder at it, my friend Colman burst out into a very angry exclamation—" Would you have a whole play then condemned, and a licence refused, because some few passages or phrases, or sentiments, were obnoxious to censure—'egad, my master, this is laying the axe to the root with a vengeance. So! because a friendly and experienced woodman would lop off a few excrescent boughs, or, perhaps, a rotten branch or two, you would have him condemn the whole tree?

" Hear me," he continued, for I was about to reply, " hear me, for by G—, my dear fellow, you have had all the talk to yourself; what has the payment of the d——d fee to do with the question? Let Government give me an adequate salary, and I *will* relinquish the fee, which, egad, it is sometimes hard enough to get, with all my heart! But will you tell me in your sober conscience that it is not money d——d hardly earned to read through nine-tenths of the pieces you send for being licensed; ' was you an ass would you like it yourself,' my master? You have been so very obliging as to say you are not the person to question my right to my hard-earned fees; but you *do* question it, it seems, though not legally. The Lord Chamberlain has the undoubted right to license or prohibit the acting of any dramatic entertainment; I presume you will admit that."

" I admit no such general proposition," I replied.

" He has the power to prohibit, but not the power to license. The Act of Parliament requires that a copy of every play, &c. intended for representation, should be sent to him fourteen days, at the least, before its performance, and he has the decided power given to him to prohibit such performance; but I defy you to point out a passage in that act, or in any other act, which states that his licence is necessary to authorise the performance. His Lordship's licence, therefore, is passive, not active. If the Act of Parliament is complied with, and a copy of the drama be sent fourteen days at least before its representation on the stage for his perusal, *should no prohibition be received,* the manager is justified, according to my reading of the act, to produce the piece, without further license or hesitation. But, as you well know, on many occasions of local and temporary effusions on the stage, the loss of fourteen days would be fatal to the object of producing them. Managers on such occasions have, doubtless, in all times since the passing of that hastily-concocted and ill-considered act (notwithstanding Lord Chesterfield's splendid and memorable speech on the subject), been ready enough to pay an *expedition fee* to some person in the Lord Chamberlain's office or household (his valet perhaps), in order to obtain an immediate sanction for its representation *by a consent to abridge the tedious period exacted by the statute.*"

" You consider then," interrupted Colman, " that the legislature treated the nobleman who generally fills the high office of Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's

Household as a sort of pack-horse, and saddled him with a pair of panniers to receive all the mingled riches and rubbish which might be thrown into them by the managers, and that he was called upon to abandon all the avocations of his office, of his rank, and of his private concerns, to sit down and read, with close attention, the multifarious productions so heaped into his load. Now, really, this is monstrous! and I must say, my worthy brother manager, there is no arguing with a man who can seriously advance so preposterous a supposition."

"I admit," I replied, "the justice of every conclusion you have come to, provided always, that your premises were correct; but, unfortunately, your premises here being false, your conclusions are false also. I never imagined that the legislature considered the Lord Chamberlain a pack-horse; I never dreamed that they intended to saddle him with a new and arduous duty, for which, in nine cases out of ten, he might be notoriously unfit; but it is no violation of justice to suppose that a new duty might be imposed on an officer of the crown or court, who received a high honour from his appointment, together, probably, with some of those *douceurs* of salary which tend to sweeten the task of official labour, without supposing he was called on to execute the new duty in his own immediate person. As he was, however, by that act made the responsible person, it would be no great stretch of imposition to expect that he would employ a confidential and qualified deputy to read and report on the eighteen or twenty (or, at that time, smaller number) of plays

annually submitted to his judgment. This confidential deputy might well be supposed to be his private secretary, or some educated and judicious person in his office. But I still maintain, notwithstanding your asperity, my dear Sir, that the legislature, while they contemplated a seasonable check on the licentiousness of the stage, never dreamed of or authorised a regular tax upon it."

"Well! we will admit all that as a matter of opinion."

"Excuse me," I interrupted, for I had grown warm on the subject, "it is no matter of opinion at all; it is matter of fact: an opinion you might controvert, but a matter of fact you must disprove if you can. I again assert that you have no right, by any Act of Parliament, to demand a fee at all, because the proprietors have no occasion for any licence at all, beyond that under which their theatres are opened."

"I rather imagine," replied Colman, "that you are prodigiously mistaken in your very novel doctrine; I think I shall be able to prove that 'fees' have existed from the first establishment of the Lord Chamberlain's power."

"On the contrary," said I, "I believe the Examiner of plays has a salary, appointed by the Lord Chamberlain or the Government, as payment for his labour; and if so, I can see no reason why a tax also should be levied on the proprietor, in order to pay him twice over for the same work."

"Excuse *me*," said he, "but by G—d that remark is d——d illiberal!"

"It can only be illiberal," I replied, "as you apply the argument to yourself. I utterly disclaim all personality of course, and speak only as regards the office, not the officer; but if the subject gives you the slightest offence, though I cannot retract my opinion, I will cease to urge it."

And here, or hereabout, the conversation changed and dropped.

I have said that Colman's appointment to his new office was at first marked by petty tyranny, and afterwards by grasping cupidity: these are hard words, unless exemplified by facts, and I would have expunged them on reflection, had I not felt that such facts illustrate character, and form an essential part of the description of the man. His petty tyranny I have already, in some degree, exhibited in his frivolous though vexatious prohibitions. His cupidity was displayed in a restless and watchful anxiety to increase his fees, and generally on occasions which no former licenser had ever dreamt of. On two occasions, soon after his appointment, he wrote to me to know on what authority I announced a new piece. My answer was, that they had been prepared in the previous season, and had been duly licensed by his predecessor. He next called on actors, on their benefit nights, to know by what right they advertised a new song, or new songs, glees, or other musical interpolations; many of them well known to the public, but never licensed for the stage, and informing him that such songs and glees, &c., must not be performed in the theatre unless duly and separately licensed by him, for

each and every one of which, a fee of two guineas was demanded. Even an occasional address was by him voted a dramatic performance; and, on these occasions, the manager could afford no redress to the actor. At length, a shrewd and clever performer, still, I hope, well remembered by the name of "little Knight," defeated in a great degree this mercenary exaction, by stringing together a long list of songs, recitations, imitations, &c., which he wished to have performed at his benefit, with any nonsense of dialogue that came into his head, and so sent them to be licensed as *one piece*. They were licensed accordingly, the dialogue was all omitted, and the ingenious actor aided his benefit by saving eight or ten guineas, which would otherwise have found their way into the pocket of the Examiner.

About twelve or fourteen years ago, Mr. Hawes, to whom the musical public of this country is so much indebted for having brought forward, through the instrumentality (no pun intended) of my theatre, the far-famed 'Der Freischütz' of Weber, followed up by the 'Oracle' of Winter, and a host of splendid operas, which I may venture, without incurring the charge of egotism, to assert, have produced a new era in the musical taste of this country, undertook the conduct of oratorios, on his own risk, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Colman saw a new oratorio announced, and instantly wrote to inquire on what authority Mr. Hawes advertised a new performance on the stage without a licence from the Lord Chamberlain. Mr. Hawes replied, that he had never heard that an

oratorio required any licence at all, and that he certainly would not be the person to establish a precedent. Colman persisted, and Hawes was resolute. The consequence was a summons to appear before the Lord Chamberlain (the Duke of Montrose), who at first was much disposed to side with Mr. Colman. Hawes, however, was as staunch to his object with the Duke, as he had been with the deputy: he urged that the words of the oratorio were entirely selected from the sacred volume, and he could not imagine that the Bible required a Lord Chamberlain's licence; that an oratorio could not by any perversion of ingenuity be deemed an entertainment OF the stage, though performed in a chamber erected UPON one; a distinction strongly marked by the great Lord Mansfield: in short, that this was the first attempt that had ever been made to enforce a demand of this nature, and he was resolutely determined to try the question of the right, rather than submit to what he considered an innovation and an imposition. The Duke at last gave up the point, and the oratorio was performed, as oratorios ever were, without any licence at all.

Had the result been different, and the manuscript had been submitted to the Examiner's pruning (I had nearly written *prurient*) pen, it would have been curious to observe what sort of skeleton he would have made of the performances. Every one knows, that in a sacred oratorio, the recorded words of Deity itself are set to music and sung; that addresses to the Supreme Being, such as "Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;" "Oh, Thou that

bringest glad tidings to Zion," meaning our Saviour, are to be found in every page; *vide* the finest and most popular composition ever perhaps produced by man, 'The Messiah,' *passim*. It would have been rather puzzling to find such compositions prohibited in one public place by a licenser, while certain dignitaries of another calling, declared the church or the cathedral desecrated by such performances! Colman to be consistent, must have made a curious mess of an oratorio.

Very shortly after his appointment, Mr. Colman made a similar attack on Mathews's performances, and this also ended in an appeal to the Lord Chamberlain by Mathews. He stated that a copy of his entertainment could not be submitted, as in fact they were never collected in writing in a regular shape; that he had only *heads* and *hints* before him to refer to, should his memory falter*; but by far the principal part was given from memory, and variously from time to time, as circumstances or the humour of the moment influenced him: that if his Grace would permit him to submit a specimen before him and his family of the entertainment then preparing, he should be proud and happy to do so, as his Lordship would then see, from the nature of his imitations, and illustrations of character and manner, that it would be impossible to convey in writing an idea of a performance which depended wholly for its effect on the tone, look, and manner of the deliverer.

To this the noble Duke assented, 'nothing loath,'

* Not quite the fact, though many of Mathews's best bits *were* delivered from his memory.—EDITOR.

and on an appointed evening, Mathews actually exhibited his 'specimen' before his Grace and family, to their no small gratification and surprise. Mr. Mathews was dismissed with triumph; and had only afterwards to send to Mr. Colman '*something as a slight sketch*,' and *a title** by which he might license the performance.

As regarded myself, Colman was more successful in annoyance. I had argued with him, on my own part, not only that Mathews's performances were not dramatic representations, since to constitute a dramatic action, there must be at least two persons, and dialogue on the stage; but that the entertainments in question, which might just as well be exhibited in a private room as on a stage, could not be subject to his Lordship's jurisdiction at all, since they were produced under a magistrate's licence, at a season of the year when the theatre was unlicensed by the Lord Chamberlain. This unlucky truth armed his dexterity with a new weapon against me, and he so contrived to place it before the Duke, that when I received my next English Opera licence for four summer months, I found it saddled with a new clause, which "provided always, that no other performances or entertainments of any kind whatsoever were to be given or permitted during the remaining eight months of the year, unless duly and specially licensed by the Lord Chamberlain."

I well knew it would be in vain to remonstrate

* This slight sketch I drew up for many seasons, whether the entertainments (with *nine* of which he was connected) were his own, or from the pens of other authors.—EDITOR.

against this act of tyranny and injustice, or I should probably have lost my English Opera licence altogether, as well as that immediately promised for Mr. Mathews's Entertainments; which licences, be it understood, emanate from his Lordship's office, and are entirely separate and distinct from the two guinea affairs issued by the Examiner*.

In the year 1829, when the liberal and princely Duke of Devonshire had accepted the office of Lord Chamberlain, *vice* the Duke of Montrose, that noble patron of the fine arts first licensed the French plays, during the vacant winter season of the English Opera House.

Here Colman, as usual, put in his claim to the right of examining every piece performed. He anticipated nice pickings from a speculation in which nothing was enacted but short vaudevilles and other light pieces, of which three or four were given every night, and very seldom any of them repeated (one or two, with the performances of Perlêt and Jenny Vertpré, excepted). This would have given the Examiner, on an average, about six guineas per night, could he establish his claim, but I really considered this too monstrous an exaction. In the first place, I objected that plays in a foreign language could never have been contemplated by the Act of Parliament, as they were no where mentioned or alluded to. Colman said they were "entertainments of the stage." To this I replied,

* Mr. Arnold had to pay two guineas for the licence of the Astronomical Lecture delivered by Mr. Bartley at the Lyceum. —EDITOR.

that they certainly were so, but not of the English stage, to which alone the act referred. All argument was useless. I appealed to his Grace, who, after having patiently investigated the matter, and heard both sides of the question, peremptorily silenced the demand, and as I supposed, put the question at rest for ever.

Alas! not so! "A change came o'er the spirit of" the cabinet. His Grace of Devonshire retired with his party, and the Duke of Montrose once more grasped the wand of office, which had, from some unknown and even unsuspected cause, always fallen with peculiar severity on my shoulders.

> "Durum est," thought I,
> "sed levius fit patientiâ,
> Quicquid corrigere est nefas."—HORACE.

The Duke of Montrose was again in power, and Colman knew his time and his man. The old story of the examining, *id est*, the FEES, which I thought dead and buried, was resuscitated; at all events it rose from the grave, to which I had fondly hoped the Duke of Devonshire had consigned it, invoked by George Colman, as the Witch of Endor invoked the spirit of Samuel, and I was strongly tempted to paraphrase the ejaculation of my cognomen, and exclaim

> "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring
> Me up."

but I was too indignant to be jocular, for that noble Lord was pleased, on an entirely *ex-parte* statement, to signify, through the said Examiner, that he had

revised and reversed the decision of his predecessor, and that in future we were condemned to pay the customary fees to the Examiner.

I would not for the world do an act of injustice to this illustrious nobleman, and therefore state that I have some reason to believe he suggested to Mr. Colman that his new decision was to be *prospective* only, and that the dramas which had been already acted under the authority of the late Lord Chamberlain, had better not be meddled or interfered with. In consequence, I received a notice from the Examiner, that on our furnishing him with a list of all those pieces which had already been brought forward, he would forego his claim on *them*, and lump the whole in *one* licence; they amounted to something like one hundred and fifty pieces, if I remember correctly, and the proposal evinced a tolerable state of indifference as to what ribaldry, blasphemy, disloyalty, they might severally contain, in case of their being repeated.

The fire which destroyed my theatre on the following season (February 16, 1830), and its fatal results, have driven from my memory all recollection of how this oppressive mandate terminated.*

My memory, indeed, was never good about trifles, but I can solemnly vouch for the truth of every fact I have asserted. A thousand documents are lost to me for ever; but my general impressions on all

* The vaudevilles and other French pieces were forwarded to the Examiner, and the licences were sent, signed by the Lord Chamberlain; the fee being reduced to one guinea each; it continues so to this day.—EDITOR.

important matters are as vividly alive in my recollection as ever. I am aware that I have confounded dates, and jumbled events out of their order; but the substance is solid, and I hope and believe the details are correct.

For mere opinions I claim nothing but candid judgment, since I trust that on such only they have been founded.

S. J. ARNOLD.

August 12, 1840.

The following account of the last moments of George Colman, is derived from his medical attendant:

" Michael's Place, Brompton,

" MY DEAR SIR, January 18, 1841.

" It was early in February 1830, that my attendance on Mr. Colman commenced. He had for many years been suffering from gout, and on this occasion I was apprehensive that there were evidences of some organic disease; he, also, was annoyed with a painful affection of the bladder, which, in the strongest constitutions, and most firm and philosophic minds, generally produces nervous irritation to a distressing degree. Each attack increased his inability to take exercise, and rendered it necessary for me to impose restrictions on his ordinary arrangements, and advise an avoidance as much as possible of social excitement.

" In November 1832, he was the subject of a very severe attack, accompanied with alarming symptoms of internal mischief, so as to require bleeding and other active measures. This illness continued three months; fortunately he rallied, and his health for some time subsequently was manifestly improving

"This improvement, however, was only temporary: some months after, the old enemy visited him, and my former fears of the existence of organic disease of the liver and other parts returned; and to avoid the excitement attending his permanent residence in town, and to gain the advantage of country air, he removed to Greenford, the residence of my late friend Mr. Henry Harris. The result of this proceeding was more beneficial than my most sanguine expectations had induced me to anticipate. Nevertheless, my visits were necessary, and although the improvement was so evident, I could not but apprehend on many occasions, when I was with him, after a three months' residence at Greenford, that it was in a great measure depending on the mental quiet and perfect domestic happiness he enjoyed under Mr. Harris's roof.

"There were evident symptoms of decay of constitutional power, although his nervous energy was as stringent as ever. He remained at Greenford, with occasional visits to Brompton, till August 1836, when it was necessary, in consequence of increasing infirmities, that I should see him very much oftener than I possibly could at such a distance. Soon after his return to his old residence, it was too plain to my mind that we were to lose one of the brightest ornaments of this country; the painful malady I have referred to, was lamentably increasing both in virulence and degree, and notwithstanding we had the advantage of the unceasing attention, kindness, and skill of Dr. Chambers, in addition to whatever assistance I could render him, he ceased to exist on the 17th October, 1836.

"It has never fallen to my lot to witness 'in the hour of death,' so much serenity of mind, such perfect philosophy, or resignation more complete. Up to within one hour of his decease, he was perfectly sensible of his danger, and bore excruciating pain with the utmost fortitude. Towards the very latter part of his life, it was necessary that he should have medical assistance

more frequently than my engagements would allow, and my then assistant (who was equally zealous in matters of religion, as skilful in his profession) was with him during the night, and occasionally in the day. About four days prior to his decease, on my morning visit, Colman's first remark was 'Don't let Mr. —— come here any more; be with me yourself, as much as possible.' I naturally inquired the reason, as he had hitherto given so much satisfaction. With the greatest calmness, he told me, that he was, and had been for some time conscious of his danger; that he had prepared himself for whatever might occur; that he had made his peace with the Almighty; and, however he might suffer, I should observe he would not shrink from the decrees of Providence; but that he had no notion of being lectured on matters of religion by others than divines; that, during the greater part of the previous night, my assistant had been endeavouring to make him a convert to his peculiar views, accompanied by some terrible descriptions attending his non-acceptation of his religious tenets, and Mr. —— was only quieted by Colman stating that I had sent him as a medical man, and that which he required was relief to his body, not to his soul. When he wanted a physician, he would send for one; when he had occasion for a divine, he would request the attendance of a clergyman of his own creed.

"On a consequent examination of my assistant, I found that he, like many members of other religious communities, imagined that a person connected with dramatic pursuits must inevitably require spiritual consolation, and ventured, in this instance to o'erstep his professional duty. Mr. —— replied, that he, in the most delicate manner, pointed out to my poor patient his immediate danger, and afterwards represented the immense importance of attending to the welfare of his soul! His remarks, he stated, were borne with much patience, and at length terminated in the manner I have related.

"It is remarkable, that although the disease of Colman was of a most painful and irritating nature, yet his mind and temper were seldom disturbed: it appeared often to me, that in the same ratio he lost physical power and suffered bodily pain, there was increased cerebral energy, intellectual activity, and wit of the most genuine character. His late friend, General Phipps, has repeatedly said to me, after the most anxious inquiries as to Mr. Colman's probable recovery, when I have foreboded evil, 'I never enjoyed his society more: he is more witty and intellectual than ever!'

"This quiescence ought not entirely to be referred to the superiority of my patient's mind, or the control he exercised over his feelings, or from physical organization. The perfect domestic happiness he enjoyed, the constant, invariable attention of Mrs. Colman, the affectionate character of her disposition, her anxious solicitude, combined with the most perfect judgment, has not only been observed by me, but also, as constantly mentioned by him as one main, even the principal source of his comfort. Never could he bear her from his sight.

"Colman, as we all know, had been for a vast number of years accustomed to the most pleasing and exciting society, but he always said to me, 'There is nothing so delightful in life as domestic happiness and comfort.' This sentiment was also often repeated at Greenford, where he had not only the comfort resulting from Mrs. Colman's society, but the affectionate anxieties of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Harris. No man was more grateful for kindness shown to him, or more highly appreciated any interest evinced by his friends.

"His funeral was private: he was buried in the vaults under Kensington church, by the side of his father; his old friends General Lewis, Mr. Harris, myself, and one or two others only attending.

I am, &c.

H. S. CHINNOCK."

The following is a List of the Dramas written by George Colman the younger.

Two to One,	1784.
Turk and No Turk,	1785.
Inkle and Yarico,	1787.
Ways and Means,	1788.
Battle of Hexham,	1789.
Surrender of Calais,	1791.
Mountaineers,	1793.
New Hay at the Old Market,	1795.
Iron Chest,	1796.
Heir-at-law,	1797.
Blue Beard,	1798.
Blue Devils,	1798.
Feudal Times,	1799.
Review,	1800.
Poor Gentleman,	1800.
John Bull,	1802.
Love Laughs at Locksmiths, } under the name of	1802.
X. Y. Z., } Arthur Griffinhoofe	
Africans,	1808
Law of Java,	

THE END.

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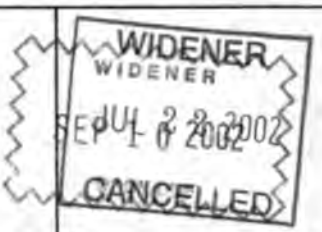
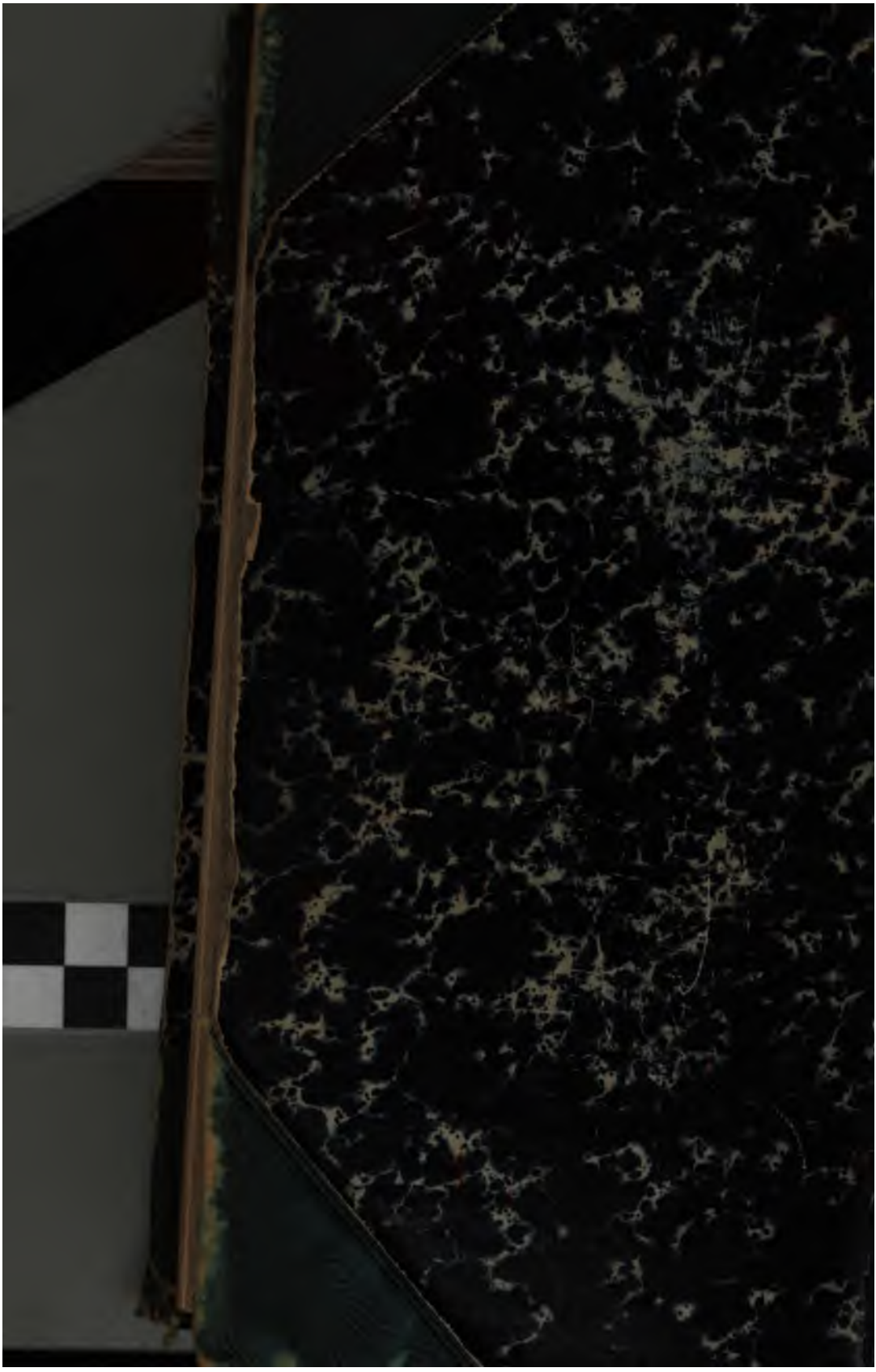
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